

PSN

Pool and Spa News

THE INDUSTRY AND THE AFTERMATH

page 32



The industry's **best pool financing**,
supported by the industry's **best team**.



Lyon Team



Elite Team



New Inquiry Team

Our team of pool loan experts is here for you and your clients from dig to swim. We're a resource for friendly, professional guidance throughout the pool loan and construction processes. **That's the Lyon Difference!**

877-754-5966 | www.lyonfinancial.net



Family of Sealants

The industry leading DECK-O-SEAL family of sealants is the trusted name in the pool industry. DECK-O-SEAL has the broadest range of sealants to meet all your needs. Our traditional two-component formulations are available as well as HS-1 SL, now offered in an easy to use 32 oz. pouch.

DECK-O-SEAL *the name you can trust.*



A Division of W. R. MEADOWS, INC. P.O. Box 397 ■ Hampshire, IL 60140
Phone: 800-542-POOL ■ sales@deckoseal.com ■ www.deckoseal.com ■ @deckoseal



Features

- 32 ASSESSING THE DAMAGE**
After the LA wildfires, professionals discuss their experiences, the known industry impacts and expectations for the future.
- 40 COMMERCIAL OR RESIDENTIAL?**
Attorneys offer advice for protecting end users and yourself with short-term pool rentals.
- 42 EMPLOYEES AT THE CENTER**
A contractor and author explains the lynchpin of his company's culture and how it contributed to his financial freedom.
- 50 TILE EN VOGUE**
The Top 10 home tile trends for 2025.
- 52 THEMATIC CONNECTION**
These waterpark theming trends provide inspiration.

Departments

- 11 REFLECTIONS**
The editor's take on issues and events
- 13 NEWS**
- 16 SCROLLING INTO CONSTRUCTION TRADES**
- 18 FROM HEDGE TO HORIZON**
- 22 WEAK BOSSES PUSH WOMEN OUT OF CONSTRUCTION**
- 24 THE DANGERS OF A LENGTHY BACKLOG**
- 28 PLANNING FOR AN AI-POWERED FUTURE**
- 66 NEW PRODUCTS**

Online

JOIN US ONLINE FOR THE LATEST INDUSTRY NEWS, INSIGHTS AND HOW-TO FEATURES

www.poolspanews.com
contact us:
poolspanews.com/contact
subscribe:
poolspanews.com/subscribe

COVER: ADOBESTOCK
ABOVE LEFT: ADOBE STOCK/GENERATED WITH AI
ABOVE RIGHT: COURTESY RIDGELINE DECKS

POOL AND SPA NEWS (ISSN 0194-5351; USPS 793-180) IS PUBLISHED SEMIMONTHLY IN JANUARY, MARCH, AND MAY; MONTHLY IN FEBRUARY, APRIL, JUNE, JULY, AUGUST, SEPTEMBER, OCTOBER, NOVEMBER AND DECEMBER BY ZONDA MEDIA, 4000 MACARTHUR BLVD STE 400 NEWPORT BEACH, CA 92660-2543, AND PRINTED IN THE USA. SUBSCRIPTIONS ARE FREE TO QUALIFIED RECIPIENTS. PUBLISHER RESERVES THE RIGHT TO DETERMINE RECIPIENT QUALIFICATION. PERIODICAL POSTAGE PAID AT NEWPORT BEACH, CA, AND ADDITIONAL MAILING OFFICES. POSTMASTER: SEND ADDRESS CHANGES TO PSN POOL AND SPA NEWS, P.O. BOX 3494, NORTHBROOK, IL 60065.

PUBLICATIONS MAIL AGREEMENT NO. 40612608. RETURN UNDELIVERABLE CANADIAN ADDRESSES TO PITNEY BOWES, P.O. BOX 25542, LONDON, ON N6C 6B2.

Building the future of housing.

**20 CONVENIENT
LOCATIONS
TO SERVE YOU**

CANOGA PARK, CA
21540 Strathern St. 91304-4136
(818) 710-9500 FAX (818) 710-8538

CONCORD, CA
1940 Arnold Ind. Pl. 94520-5318
(925) 827-4300 FAX (925) 676-0836

GARDEN GROVE, CA
11572 Salinaz Ave. 92843-3703
(714) 638-3873 FAX (714) 638-0130

RIVERSIDE, CA
1343 Dodson Way 92507-2073
(951) 682-7700 FAX (951) 369-3152

SACRAMENTO, CA
2801 Land Ave. 95815-1835
(916) 927-2882 FAX (916) 927-5133

SAN DIEGO, CA
7777 Ostrow St. 92111-3601
(858) 565-1330 FAX (858) 279-5182

SAN JOSE, CA
2170 Del Franco St. 95131-1575
(408) 432-9700 FAX (408) 432-0542

SANTA ANA, CA
1443 S. Lyon St. 92705-4643
(714) 973-4744 FAX (714) 542-7790

VAN NUYS, CA
8151 Orion Ave. 91406-1435
(818) 997-6651 FAX (818) 997-0150

LAS VEGAS, NV
4145 West Sunset Rd. 89118-3873
(702) 617-0010 FAX (702) 617-0977

MESA, AZ
1766 S. Fraser Dr. 85204-6601
(480) 351-2929 FAX (480) 507-3666

PHOENIX, AZ
3340 E. McDowell Rd. 85008-3844
(602) 244-2727 FAX (602) 220-4437

PHOENIX, AZ
20810 N. 25th Pl. 85050-4619
(602) 569-3177 FAX (602) 569-3178

TUCSON, AZ
4825 N Shamrock Pl. 85705-1497
(520) 887-1100 FAX (520) 887-1145

FORT LAUDERDALE, FL
5901 Powerline Rd. 33309-2011
(954) 771-1110 FAX (954) 771-1284

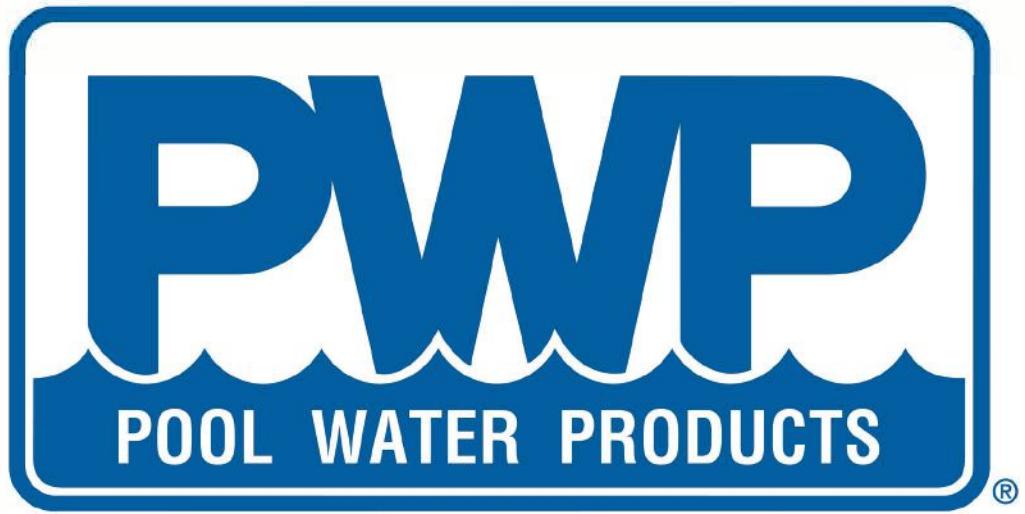
LONGWOOD, FL
524 Commerce Way 32750-7627
(407) 260-2323 FAX (407) 830-1884

SARASOTA, FL
6500 Sawyer Loop Rd. 34238-2773
(941) 922-1919 FAX (941) 922-7822

DALLAS, TX
2334 Havenhurst St. 75234-5730
(972) 243-6006 FAX (972) 484-0346

HOUSTON, TX
12849 Windfern Rd. 77064-3008
(281) 894-7071 FAX (281) 894-5379

RICHLAND HILLS, TX
7417 Whitehall St. 76118-6461
(817) 284-1600 FAX (817) 284-2175



OFFERS YOU MORE!



PENTAIR

ALL-CLEAR
Professional Pool Chemicals

LASCO
Fittings, Inc.



A Regal Brand

Raypak
A Rheem Company



Simply Smarter.



"Pool, Spa, and Fountain Water Care"



PSN

Pool and Spa News

EDITORIAL

JOANNE McCLAIN

Editor-in-Chief
jmccain@zondahome.com

REBECCA ROBLEDO

Deputy Editor
rrobledo@zondahome.com

SALES

GARY CARR

Director, Strategic Accounts
gcarr@zondahome.com

LISA HEITNER

Director, Strategic Accounts
lheitner@zondahome.com

ART

CAROLYN SEWELL

Design Director, Media

MELISSA KROCHMAL

Graphic Designer

PUBLISHED BY ZONDA MEDIA

JEFF MEYERS

Chief Executive Officer

MELISSA BILLITER

Chief Financial Officer

ANDREW REID

Chief Operating Officer

MIA VALLO

Executive Vice President/General Manager

STEVE LADURANTAYE

Senior Vice President, Content

AMY DUDLEY

Chief Sales Officer

RICH TOMKO

Senior Vice President

PAUL TOURBAF

Executive Vice President, Sales

TIM SULLIVAN

Chief Advisory Officer

KURT NELSON

Group Vice President, Talent Strategy

EDITORIAL AND ADVERTISING OFFICES: 4000 Macarthur Blvd Ste 400, Newport Beach, CA 92660-2543 • (323) 801-4900; SUBSCRIPTION INQUIRIES & BACK-ISSUE ORDERS: (888) 269-8410; e-mail, psn@omeda.com; REPRINTS: Wright's Media, (877) 652-5295; e-mail, zonda@wrightsmedia.com

ADVERTISER BILLING QUESTIONS: (866) 846-0282; LIST RENTALS: The Information Refinery, Brian Clotworthy (800) 529-9020; email, brian@infofinery.com; PRIVACY OF MAILING LIST: We rent our subscriber list to reputable companies. If you do not wish to receive promotional materials from other companies, please call us, toll free, at (888) 269-8410. To be removed from the mailing list, please email your request including name and full mailing address to: psn@omeda.com.

POSTMASTER: Please send address changes to PSN Pool and Spa News, P.O. Box 3494, Northbrook, IL 60065; PSN Pool and Spa News will occasionally write about companies in which its parent organization, Zonda Media, has an investment interest. When it does, the magazine will fully disclose that relationship. Reproduction in whole or in part is prohibited without written authorization. Opinions expressed are those of the authors or persons quoted and not necessarily those of PSN Pool and Spa News. © Copyright 2025 by Zonda Media, a Delaware Corporation

Zonda.

Building the future
of housing.

SAFETY VACUUM RELEASE SYSTEMS

*Installs Easily
in Minutes!*

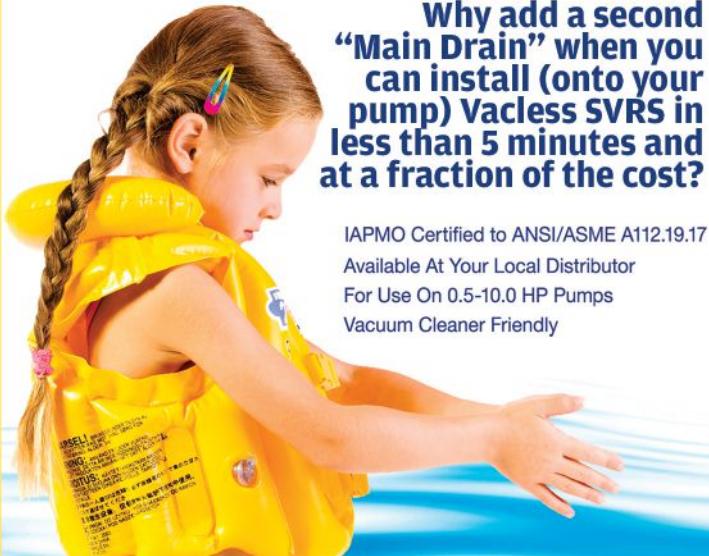
Adjustable or Electrical
Installation



Do you want to become VGB Compliant?

Why add a second
“Main Drain” when you
can install (onto your
pump) Vacless SVRS in
less than 5 minutes and
at a fraction of the cost?

IAPMO Certified to ANSI/ASME A112.19.17
Available At Your Local Distributor
For Use On 0.5-10.0 HP Pumps
Vacuum Cleaner Friendly



Meets SVRS Requirements of Virginia Graeme Baker Act

VACCARE POOL + SPA SAFETY PRODUCTS AR300

AUTOMATIC

AIR RELIEF VALVE

FOR POOL FILTERS

This product is designed to guard against possible serious injuries or even death due to the accidental blow offs of Pool Filters. The AR300 makes the filter run efficiently, cuts filtration time, and saves you money.

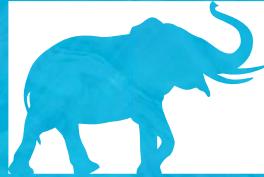
- This automatic air relief safety valve provides immediate release of entrapped air inside a pool filter.
- Eliminates the presence of compressed air which prevents the water from being fully engaged with the filtration media/element.



www.vaccare.com

 **Vacless**[™]
Pool and Spa Safety Products[™]

To locate your nearest distributor visit
www.vacless.com
or call
(818) 701-6200



LOOP-LOC[®]
THE ONE. THE ONLY.

Bask in the radiant quality, durability, and variety of LOOP-LOC vinyl pool liners where every pattern is a reflection of sun-soaked luxury. Explore our distinguished collection of over 40 luxury liner patterns, meticulously crafted from CFFA-certified vinyl that stands the test of time. These liners not only exemplify durability, but also redefine backyard elegance. With LOOP-LOC, dive confidently into a world of dealer direct leisure and luxury, where every product shines as the centerpiece of sun-kissed relaxation.

SOAK

IT ALL IN



looploc.com

YOU MAKE IT

Paradise

WE MAKE IT

Affordable!

**CLOSE MORE DEALS WITH
THE INDUSTRY'S BEST POOL LOANS!**

TERMS UP TO
30 YEARS

AMOUNTS UP TO
\$200,000



LYON FINANCIAL

877-754-5966 | www.lyonfinancial.net

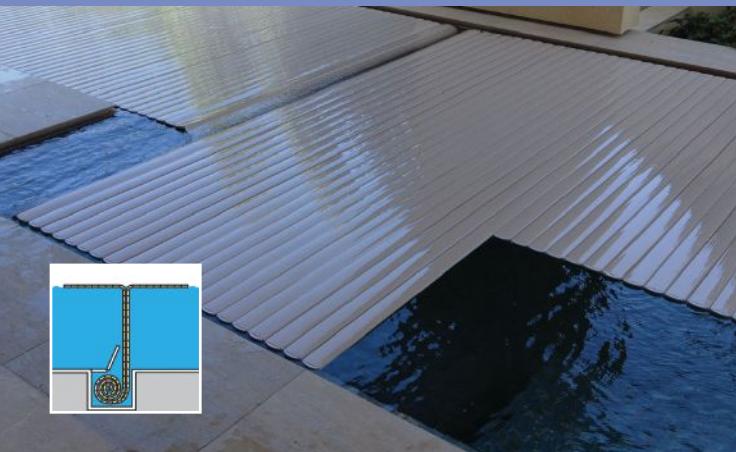


HydraLux™ by Aquamatic Cover Systems

- Trackless design allows for covering virtually any converging shape.
- Highest insulating value of any automatic cover.
- Numerous application allowing for freedom of design, including “in-floor” installations.
- Durable and proven patented Aquamatic all-fluid hydraulic drive and control system.
- 20-year mechanical and 5-year slat warranties.
- Worldwide distribution and installation



See many examples at aquamatic.com, or contact one of our design specialists at 800.262.4044



A Feast of Industry Insights



Joanne McClain
Editor-in-Chief, PSN

Welcome to this smorgasbord of an issue! So many things are going on in the world, to say the least, and we cover many seemingly disparate topics in this issue, but I promise, each story has an impact or effect on members in our industry.

As a specialty of the broader construction industry, you don't need me to point out the many similarities in which ours parallels, say another construction subspecialty, such as home remodeling. We share a lot of the same concerns as those in that field: Many are small- to mid-sized businesses needing solutions in areas of operations and management, staffing and training, sales and marketing — to name but a few.

In this issue, we learn from two veteran remodelers. The first advises on a problem many pool builders began experiencing due to the high pandemic-driven demand: long backlogs. But in an unpredictable time when margins are sure to grow ever thinner, how can you protect your company's profits? ("The Dangers of a Lengthy Backlog" on page 24) The second remodeler explains why building a company culture around employee-centered practices is good for business, along with specific examples on what policies worked well for him ("Employees at the Center" on page 42).

But now, let's zoom out to look to the larger, general construction industry for a glimpse into the future. We know that the trickle-down effect is real, so what can we in the residential pool and spa space expect to see happening in the months and possibly years to come?

- Artificial intelligence. Currently the buzzword on everyone's lips, people want to know how to harness these quickly evolving tech tools to better serve our businesses. What does the construction industry have to say? (Hint: turn to page 28.)

- Skilled labor shortage. This perennial problem is a tricky one, and we have two short articles addressing different sides of the coin. Learn how TikTok and Instagram are moving the needle to encourage the Toolbelt Generation to enter the construction trades (page 16), but then read why many women currently in construction jobs want to leave (page 22).

- Design trends. A look at current interior tile design trends (page 50) reveals a peek into possibilities for the outdoor space.

- Waterpark theming. Learn why theming makes all the difference and how it can affect not only those directly involved in building commercial pools but how it might impact residential builds (page 52).

So feast on all the varied, thought-provoking content in this issue, and drop me a line to let me know what business concerns are top of mind as you look ahead into the year. We'll do our best to help find solutions.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joanne McClain". The signature is fluid and cursive.

jmccain@zondahome.com



FIBER SHIELD™

FSV-20

POOL AND SPA BARRIER COAT

FIBER SHIELD™ (FSV) is a 100% vinyl-ester-based barrier coat designed to replace traditional skin coats, offering superior protection against osmotic blistering while significantly reducing manufacturing time. Developed originally for the marine industry, FSV is trusted by several leading boat manufacturers as the go-to barrier coat for their vessels.

FSV arrives premixed in 55-gallon drums, featuring a patented blend of additives and a premium vinyl-ester resin backbone. This innovative composition forms an exceptional bond between the acrylic shell/gelcoat and bulk fiberglass layers. Sprayed directly onto the underside of the acrylic shell or gelcoat, FSV creates an unmatched barrier that prevents blistering, even under prolonged exposure to high heat and varying pH conditions.

Unlike traditional skin coats, FSV is engineered to be applied without glass, offering two significant advantages:

- 1. Enhanced Blister Resistance:** Tests have shown that incorporating glass strands with vinyl-ester skin coats can trap air voids, increasing the risk of blistering. FSV sprays on evenly, effortlessly filling tight radii without creating air pockets.
- 2. Faster Production:** FSV eliminates the need for rolling or sanding, enabling quicker cure times and streamlined manufacturing. A single gun operator can spray each spa in approximately five minutes, and with its rapid gel time and excellent bond strength, the spa is ready for bulk lamination just 40 minutes after application.

With its proven performance and efficiency, FSV delivers unparalleled blister protection and production advantages, setting a new standard for barrier coat technology in the spa and pool industries.

SPECIFICATIONS

- 100% Vinyl Ester Resin Base
- 16% Styrene
- 5.5 lbs. per gallon
- 4-8 minutes for cup gel (100 gm. mass @ 77° F.)
- 45-60 minutes for cure to lamination (mold & ambient temperature dependent)
- 1.5% MEKP catalyst recommended
- 30-50 mils application



Composite Technologies International
1500 Charles A Daugherty Dr
Anniston, AL 36207
(256) 403-5629
www.compositetechnologies.com



SWIM Act Reintroduced

With the legislation, industry advocates hope to make swim lessons accessible to more families.

BY REBECCA ROBLEDO

Congress is taking another swipe at legislation that industry advocates believe will make it easier for families to afford swim lessons.

HR 1506, called the Safe Water Instruction for Minors (SWIM) Act, proposes that basic swim lessons become classified as a qualified expense for applying funds from Health Savings Accounts (HSAs) and Flexible Savings Accounts (FSAs). This would allow the use of pre-tax dollars.

“The SWIM Act is a key step towards ensuring wider access to swim lessons for children throughout the nation,” said Rowdy Gaines, PHTA vice president of partnerships and development, who leads PHTA’s Step Into Swim program. “Drowning incidents have increased over the past five years, particularly in underserved communities, but it has been proven that participating in swim lessons saves lives.”

The Pool & Hot Tub Alliance believes that the bill stands a good chance of passing. To start, it enjoys bipartisan support. Introduced this session by W. Gregory Steube (R-FL), its co-sponsors include Deborah Ross (D-NC), Donald Davis (D-NC), and James Moylan (R-Guam-At Large).

“By giving Americans more freedom to make decisions with their hard-earned money, Congress can protect America’s youth while

reducing costs for working families,” Steube said.

The bill was introduced early in the session, leaving a longer timeline to pass. Additionally, Steube sits on the first committee to hear the bill — Ways and Means. Advocates have prospects for a Senate sponsor, said Justin Wiley PHTA’s vice president of government relations, standards and codes.

“All those point to a good possibility,” Wiley says. “Any piece of legislation that’s introduced in any venue ... is not an easy process. It requires a lot of legwork, coalition building and support, and a little bit of luck. All that said, I think we’re in a pretty good position.”

Challenges could come as the House and Senate focus on President Donald Trump’s agenda, especially during budget season. Wiley hopes the Swim Act could get pulled into the budget package. “I’d say it’s a very, very slight opportunity, but it is an opportunity,” he said.

In late April/early May, PHTA will hold its Day on the Hill, when it meets with various legislators and staffers. This will be one of its priorities as it has certain officials’ ear, Wiley said.

In addition to PHTA, several safety advocacy groups also support the bill, PHTA said. Those interested in participating may go to SwimAct.org.

Amenity Collective Expands Mgmt Team

The Amenity Collective, a PSN Top 50 Service Company, expanded its leadership by promoting Eric Rowell to general counsel and naming Troy Lindbeck as COO. “Bringing Troy on board strengthens our focus on residential aquatics, a space we’re excited to grow both organically and through acquisitions,” said CEO Brian Sheehan. “Promoting Eric is a testament to the value we place on developing and rewarding top talent from within.”

Rowell has worked at The Amenity Collective’s Huntersville, N.C. office for four years as director of risk management. A licensed attorney in North and South Carolina, he brings more than 15 years of legal experience across corporate risk management, contract law, and insurance claims.

Lindbeck has more than a decade of experience in aquatics, franchise development, real estate, construction, and service operations. He most recently served as Vice President of Operations at Pinch A Penny Pool Patio Spa, where he led franchise development, real estate, and operational strategy.

B&B Joins Pool Service Partners

B&B Swimming Pool Service, a well-known pool and spa company based in Chestnut Ridge, N.Y., has been acquired by Northeastern service consolidator Pool Service Partners.

The firm will continue to operate under its current brand, as is standard for companies acquired by Pool Service Partners. Co-founder Craig Bagin will remain with B&B, running its construction business and consulting on the service side.

Florida Legislative Session Begins

BY REBECCA ROBLEDO

Florida has begun this year's legislative session. With it, the Florida Swimming Pool Association (FSPA) has hopes for a scope of language bill and is monitoring a number of water-safety bills.

"We're not looking to expand or contract the scope of work, but clarify the terminology and modernize it to current industry parlance," said Dallas Thiesen, FSPA's chief government relations officer.

Currently, contractors find officials interpreting current scope-of-work language differently from jurisdiction to jurisdiction. With SB 570 and HB

453, FSPA hopes that will end.

"We have 453 building officials, give or take," Thiesen said. "So we have 453 scopes of work."

Right now, builders can hit unexpected roadblocks, such as being denied a permit to expand a deck it built in the past, since the pool itself isn't included in the new job. They may be required to hire another contractor to build a retaining wall, or be told they can't operate a dewatering pump.

Other relevant bills address water safety. SB604 and HB 93 would make the state's residential swimming pool safety device mandate retroac-

tive when properties are transferred or sold.

HB207 would require door alarms on all doors leading directly to a swimming pool at a multifamily residence.

SB568 and HB419 would require organizations to gather specific information, provide stipulated types of floating devices and take other extra measures to protect certain children.

The state legislature also is considering a pair of bills addressing heat-related illness. SB510 and HB35 would require certain employers to implement an outdoor heat-exposure safety program.

PHTA Awards Annual Educational Scholarships

The Pool & Hot Tub Alliance named this year's recipients of the PHTA Scholarship and the Greg Garrett Scholarship.

The PHTA Scholarship Program honors public pool or spa operators pursuing further education to better protect public health. PHTA-certified professionals and immediate family members qualify for the funds, which may be applied to college tuition.

The most recent recipients are: Richard Hauser, Cecilia Oseguera, Egan Barzilay, and Kaitlyn Forney.

Hauser and Oseguera received the \$2,000 Board Scholarship for the 2024-25 academic year. Barzilay and Kaitlyn Forney, both children of CPO

instructors, each received \$1,000 for the 2024-25 academic year.

The 2024 Greg Garrett Scholarship was started in the memory of Greg Garrett, a 45-year industry veteran, who held many leadership roles. The \$5,000 scholarship, awarded by PHTA's Recreational Water & Air Quality Committee, goes to PHTA members in the builder or service sector. The funds may be applied to PHTA educational or certification fees. A matching sponsorship from Periodic Products made it possible to name two winners.

This year's award went to Matthew Ryther, service manager at Acqua Pura Pool Service, and Jeff Johnson, president of Midwest Pools.

Ryther has earned several professional certifications, including Certified Pool & Spa Operator, Certified Service Technician, and Certified Advanced Pool Builder Professional. He also serves on the PHTA Service Council and the PHTA-11 Standard Writing Committee to develop the standard on water quality in public pools and spas.

Johnson recently became a Certified Master Pool Builder & Design Professional. He has expanded his business from aboveground pool installation to custom concrete pool construction and design, and is planning to expand into pool service and maintenance.

Choose Your Finishing Touch



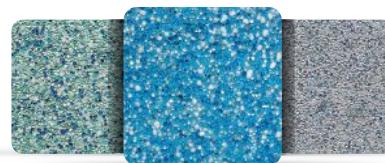
NPT empowers leading builders to bring backyard dreams to life with unmatched confidence. With the most expansive product line, we feature an unparalleled selection of pool tiles, finishes, hardscapes, and accessories—ensuring every pool is a masterpiece.

With job site delivery and expert assistance, we make it easy to meet tight deadlines without compromise. While your local NPT showrooms provide a hands-on experience with samples and personalized support—helping your clients select just the right details.

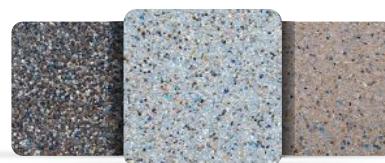
As your trusted partner, we also provide industry training for approved applicators, networking opportunities, and exclusive insights to keep your business thriving. With NPT, you're not just building pools. You're building a legacy.

THE DETAILS OF BACKYARD DREAMS

JewelScapes
Fabricated Surface System



StoneScapes
Fabricated Surface System



QuartzScapes
Fabricated Surface System



FIND OR BECOME AN APPROVED APPLICATOR



Scrolling Into the Construction Trades

A survey from Thumbtack reports Gen Z is increasingly interested in the skilled trades, with TikTok and Instagram driving growth.

BY VINCENT SALANDRO



With the construction industry facing a skilled labor shortage that is likely to impact future activity, an unlikely source is emerging as a recruitment tool: social media.

According to the Future of Skilled Trades Report from Thumbtack, two out of three Gen Zers say social media has increased their interest in the trades. Among Gen Zers with a college degree, the share increases to three in four.

The report suggests Gen Z individuals are increasingly turning to social media for career advice, drawn in particular to content showing authentic on-the-job experiences. Social media ranks as the second biggest influence of this generation's career path, ranking ahead of teachers, siblings, and extended family, according to Thumbtack.

"Gen Zers are looking for careers that allow them to work and earn money right away, while pursuing a

career they enjoy and learning new skills — all qualities that the skilled trades deliver on," Marco Zappacosta, co-founder and CEO of Thumbtack, says. "This is good news for both Gen Z and our communities: Their interest in the trades will help fill much needed gaps as plumbers, electricians, and contractors retire, building much needed infrastructure and housing supply."

According to the survey, 90% of four-year college graduates say teens are incorrectly told college is the only way to be successful. This shift in thinking is reflected by 80% of Gen Z respondents agreeing that the skilled trades can be a better pathway to economic security than college. Among Gen Zers with college degrees, 93% agree the skilled trades can be a better path to economic security.

Approximately 55% of Gen Z is now considering a career in the skilled trades, up 12 points compared to the

prior year Thumbtack report. Among Gen Zers with college degrees, 73% are considering a career in the skilled trades.

Social media is helping drive the shift in perception among Gen Zers: 77% have seen increased attention to the trades on social media in the past years, primarily on TikTok or Instagram. Among skilled trades pros surveyed by Thumbtack, 60% believe their profession is becoming increasingly "Instagrammable."

According to the survey, there is near equal interest among Gen Z women and men in the trades (52% vs. 57%), signaling a possible shift from previous generations.

The Future of Skilled Trades Report also surveyed Gen Z parents to gauge perceptions about careers in the trades. Eighty percent of surveyed parents agree learning a skilled trade can be a better pathway to economic security than going to college. Despite this view, 77% of parents still say they have encouraged their children to attend a four-year college.

The second annual Future of Skilled Trades Report generated 1,000 responses from Gen Z individuals between the ages of 16 and 26, 1,000 adults with at least one child between the ages of 16 and 26, and 1,233 individuals primarily employed in the skilled trades. Thumbtack is a technology company that connects homeowners with local professionals for tasks including small fixes, routine maintenance, and major improvements.

ADOBE STOCK

“ultra”

strong. beautiful. warranted for life.

for a reason

Ultra Aluminum™ fencing is designed to meet all the stringent BOCA swimming pool safety codes—fence and rail heights, picket spacing, and gates.



ULTRAFENCE.COM | 800.656.4420

Let Ultra Aluminum meet your fence needs with quality products and first-class customer service at very competitive prices.

From Hedge to Horizon

Meticulous concrete footing work transforms a hedgerow into a breathtaking transparent waterfront barrier.

BY RYAN LIEUALLEN



Our customer, who lives on a tranquil river flowing through Washington's Spokane Valley, decided to remove a 6-foot-tall hedgerow that was blocking his river views and replace it with a retaining wall topped with a frameless glass railing system. A landscaper was contracted to build the retaining wall, while our job was

to install the glass fence.

We considered pouring a continuous concrete footing to create a solid and level mounting surface for the brackets, or spigots, that support the 34-inch-high-by- $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch-thick glass panels, but the narrow concrete top surface would be at increased risk of spalling from the anchor attach-

ments. Instead, we decided to support the spigots with individual concrete footings, which would be easier to hide and require significantly less concrete and labor to form and pour.

Creating 44 individual footings that are perfectly level with each other on a sloping site was a challenge. While the landscapers were building the retaining wall, I worked with them to place compacted gravel in the line of the footings, then they backfilled to finish grade (see photo below at left). We dug each footing by hand to set the 44 12-inch-diameter cardboard footing forms 24 inches deep, relying heavily on a laser level as we took a full day setting, bracing, leveling, and double-checking the forms before pouring concrete (see photo on page 20 at right).

We mixed the concrete by hand and carefully shoveled each scoop of concrete into the forms so as not to disturb them. We used a concrete vibrator to eliminate air pockets, then rechecked with the laser before finishing the pour. Mixing concrete by hand sometimes creates slightly different slumps from batch to batch, so we let the footings set for two weeks in case there was uneven curing.

We used $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch-thick wood strips cut to the length of the panels to align the spigots, dry-setting the spigots on the footings to get our lines. Then we drilled holes for the anchor bolts and set the spigots, knowing they would probably need adjustment after we set all the glass loosely to check the fit.

PHOTOS COURTESY RIDGELINE DECKS

CUSTOMERS CHEATING ON YOU WITH ONLINE RETAILERS?



Start selling the Sustain® Chlorination System...

...and they'll be true to you FOREVER.



sustainchemicals.com
1-800-245-2974

Sustain® Shows Dealers the Love

- Not Readily Available Online
- Not Sold In Mass Merchant Stores
- Protected Sales Territory for Authorized Dealers
- Delivers Crystal Clear Pool Water in Just 10 Minutes of Pool Care a Week



**Incentives Available
for New Enrollees**

SCAN TO LEARN MORE

I would like to say all the footings were perfectly level, but that was not the case. But they were within 1/8 inch of each other, so only needed a slight bit of shimming inside the spigot. We also started by setting the glass panels over the footings that were a little low, knowing that we could grind the concrete down a bit on the higher ones. Once the straight line was created, we also did minimal shimming of some of the spigots from front to back. The final process was getting each glass panel to flow level into the next, which required very fine shimming and minor adjustments for equal spacing.

Ryan Lieuallen owns Ridgeline Decks in Spokane, Wash



EXCELLENT POOL DESIGN DOESN'T STOP AT THE ACCESS POINTS.

- Custom colors
- Variety of pool lift models
- Above & below ground apps
- Easy specs
- Excellent Service
- Best industry warranties
- Family owned & operated
- Made in Montana, USA


Aqua Creek Products
 aquacreek.com
 888-687-3552



ONE MEASURE BY ANCHOR™

One Measure is the fastest, most accurate laser tool for pool covers, cutting measuring time in half with a just one person. Bluetooth connectivity ensures seamless data transfer—no Wi-Fi is needed. Measure in any weather with a bright-sunlight camera, adjust instantly with the relocate function, and get instant quotes via the Anchor Dealer Portal. Plus, access 24/7 training through Anchor University and expert support for total confidence.



SAFETY POOL COVERS

Protect your loved ones and extend your pool's life with Anchor's high-quality safety covers. Our solid covers feature durable vinyl-coated fabric, while mesh covers prevent debris buildup. The 5-Star Solid, Cross-Star, and Defender Mesh offer superior strength and algae reduction. We also provide custom spa covers and a replacement program for any brand. With industry-leading designs, Anchor ensures lasting safety and peace of mind.



PERGOLAM®

Experience outdoor luxury with Pergolam®, crafted from powder-coated aluminum & stainless steel. This louvered-roof pergola allows you to easily adjust the louvers from 0 to 150° for optimal shade & breeze, providing complete protection from the elements when closed. With hidden hardware, electronic components, & customizable lighting options, Pergolam® elevates your outdoor living space.



Weak Bosses Push Women Out Of Construction

A new report from Ambition Theory and NCCER finds that 68% of women in construction say poor leadership is why they want to leave the industry.

BY LEAH DRAFFEN



of women in construction say **poor leadership** is driving them out



of women in construction **want career growth opportunities**



of respondents **believe** their companies are taking steps to **support them**

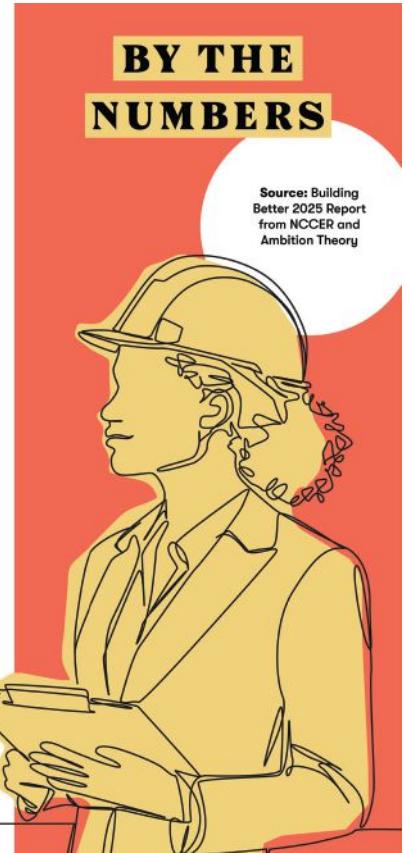
While **63%** of companies report having mentorship programs, only **37%** of women have participated in one.



of women feel leadership programs **prepare them** for the reality of construction **leadership**



say their companies offer leadership **programs tailored to their needs**



Bad managers are pushing women out of the construction industry.

A report says 68% of women cite bad management as a reason for leaving, surpassing even unequal pay. The exodus is costing companies talent and productivity while hurting profits.

- 87% want career growth opportunities.
- 84% believe their companies are trying to support them.
- 47% feel leadership programs prepare them for the next step in their

careers in construction.

- 63% of companies report mentorship programs, but only 37% of women have participated.

The data comes from the “Building Better 2025: Rethinking Leadership in Construction” report from the Ambition Center for Construction Education and Research. It surveyed 775 women.

It recommends:

- Redesigning leadership development for the changing workforce and

promoting psychological safety.

- Make sponsorship systematic and part of company culture.
- Clarifying what it takes to advance.
- Improving leadership culture.

“Women aren’t just looking for guidance — they need champions who will advocate for them in the rooms where decisions are made,” the report says.

This article previously appeared in sister publication Builder.

BUILDER ILLUSTRATION: ADOBE STOCK



The only way to do concrete pool coping

We have used the Z forms several times for pool copings and are always impressed with their ease of use and versatility.

Emil G.  Verified User

96% CUSTOMER SATISFACTION!



POOLFORM
CONCRETE COUNTERTOP SOLUTIONS

Pool by: Brooks Malone, TN

 info@zpoolform.com

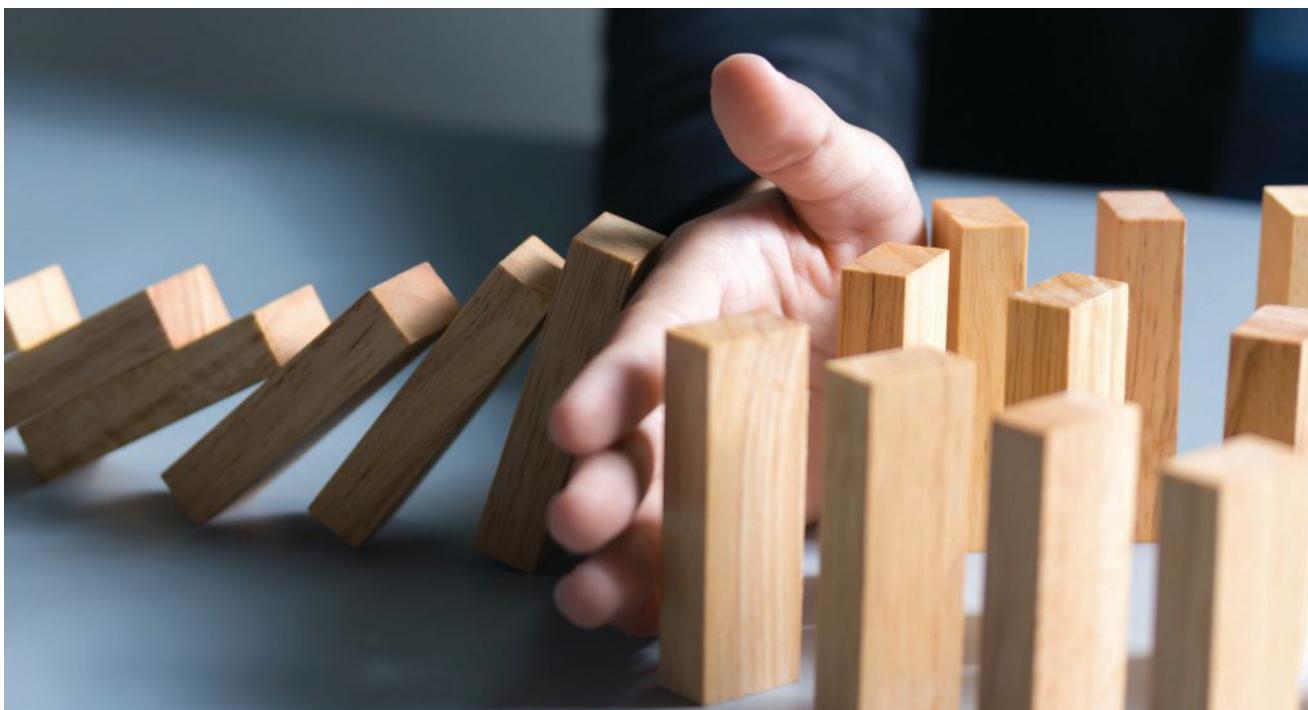
 www.zpoolform.com

 (570) 587-3799

The Dangers of a Lengthy Backlog

Having lots of work lined up is great, providing you anticipate potential problems.

BY PAUL WINANS



When times are good, it is normal for most companies to have a longer backlog than they've ever experienced. Six months or more isn't unusual, and some companies have signed contracts that extend their backlog over a year.

A big backlog is great. The security of having all that work in the hopper — what a good feeling!

However, there can be some downsides. What are they and how can they be addressed so a construction company doesn't watch its profits disappear?

LIFE CIRCUMSTANCES CHANGE

Consider clients who are so happy to

have their projects ready to be built and have a start date to look forward to. Then something happens: A death in the family. A change in jobs. A spouse's health is compromised. A protracted interaction with a lender proves to be pointless. And so on.

These things are impossible to anticipate. But you must.

Consider working with your lawyer to create a clause in your construction contract regarding the need for your company to recover all costs incurred for preparation work on a project that happen after the contract is signed. Some of these might be:

- Construction drawings being

completed

- Permit fees
- Soil engineer fees
- Time spent by your company to complete the job book and related documents

When the contract is being signed, make sure to slow down and talk this through with a client. Get their buy-in before the issue becomes reality.

COSTS INCREASE

Within just a few months, costs can increase for different aspects of a project. The longer the time between signing the contract and the start of construction, the more likely this could occur.



California Pools

The water's calling.

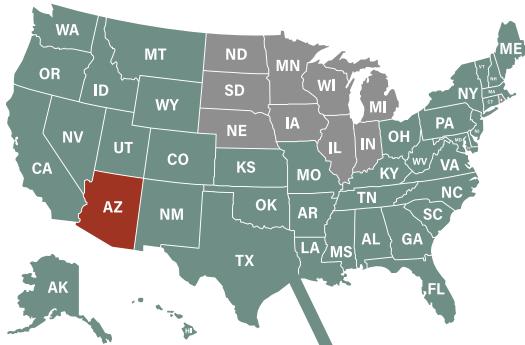
Let's build your future together.

Since 1952

Join our pool construction franchise.

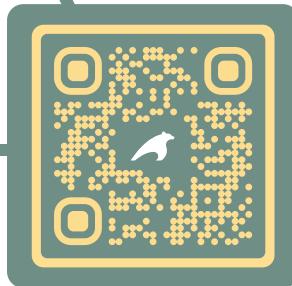
and Capitalize on the Benefits.

- Available
- Limited
- Unavailable



- 1. Established, Trusted Brand Legacy.**
- 2. Dynamic, Dedicated Marketing Experts.**
- 3. Affordable Investment with High Returns.**
- 4. Streamlined, Powerful Operational Systems.**
- 5. Comprehensive Training & Cutting-Edge Tools.**
- 6. Personalized Coaching & Expert Guidance.**
- 7. Enhanced Purchasing Power & Savings.**
- 8. Boosted Lead Generation for Faster Growth.**
- 9. Vibrant Culture with Unforgettable Events.**
- 10. Clear Roadmap to Financial Independence.**

Unlock your potential with California Pools, a leading name in the pool and outdoor living industry. As a franchisee, you'll join a brand with decades of experience, a reputation for excellence, and a proven business model designed for success. Our comprehensive support system includes world-class training, marketing, and ongoing operational assistance, empowering you to build a thriving business in a high-demand market. If you're passionate about creating beautiful outdoor spaces and ready to dive into a rewarding entrepreneurial venture, contact us today and take the first step toward owning your own California Pools franchise. Your future starts here!



Book a time now to discuss this limited opportunity and learn how you can achieve your business dreams with us.

Scan here to learn more.

Featured on
Pool Kings



Secure Your Territory Today at franchisecp.com/psn

This advertisement does not represent an offer to sell a franchise. The offer of a franchise can only be made through the delivery of a franchise disclosure document. Certain states require that we register the franchise disclosure document in those states. We are not directing the communications on this web site to the residents of any of those states. Moreover, we will not offer or sell franchises in those states until we have registered the franchise (or obtained an applicable exemption from registration) and delivered the franchise disclosure document to the prospective franchisee that complies with applicable law.

Add in that we are in one of the longest bull markets ever. Inflation is likely at some point. Wage pressure is already a factor. Finally, throw in that we are at the beginning of trade wars with many countries.

Pretty unpredictable set of circumstances, isn't it?

What to do so the company avoids doing a lot of work per plan and ends of making little or no gross profit due to increased costs?

1. Sooner rather than later, meet with every one one of your trade contractors and vendors. How long will their price be stable? What would cause their price to go up? How do they suggest projects with a long backlog be handled so they and you feel well-served if prices do increase?

By being proactive, a company has more control than if they respond reactively.

2. Work with your lawyer to add language to your construction contract to address how the company will handle cost increases.

Raw costs should be paid by the client, in my opinion. I suggest that the additional gross profit on the increase in raw costs should not be paid by the client.

Get specific in the language in your contract regarding the above. Anticipate the client wanting to see the original quotes from your trade contractors and vendors and the revised quotes. How is it best that be handled?

Review all the above with your clients while signing the contract.

3. Identify the phases of the work where it is most likely that costs may increase. Again, review this information with your clients while signing the contract.

4. Include in your project price a

contingency to cover cost increases up to point. You can decide whether to share this information with your client. Consider not doing that. The resulting wiggle room can help you work your way through some minor cost increases without having to go to the client for additional monies.

Like most things in life, a big backlog has pluses and minuses. By looking ahead and anticipating the downsides you can minimize the impact of projects going away and/or construction costs increasing.

Being proactive makes it more likely you will be in control. Being reactive makes it so you are not. Now that would be a big burden.

This article previously appeared in sister publication JLC. Paul Winans is a veteran remodeler who worked as a consultant to remodeling business owners.

Winter Safety with Style



Steps or Raised Walls? No Problem

Meyco's patented PolyGuard treatment hugs steps and walls, trapping debris.

One-of-a-Kind Pool? No Problem

Meyco's covers are design with custom applications to keep pools safe and secure.

Everyone Trusts the Original.™

For more information call 800-446-3926, visit meycocovers.com or email sales@meycocovers.com



Nature Works[®]

Hi - Tech Glass Filter Media

With Anti-Compaction Technology[®]



NSF / ANSI / CAN 50 and 61# C0609841-02
The Only Glass Media Certified Safe
For Both Pools and Drinking Water!

Glass Filter Media Done Right!

Nature Works is Revolutionary.

It's not just another uni-grain crushed glass media-it is the only glass media in the world that is certified by NSF to be safe enough for drinking water. Replacing the sand in any filter with Nature Works Calibrated Glass Media will not only improve the filters performance but will dramatically lower energy, water, heat and chemical costs.

First, we **Crush Recycled** sanitary virgin plate and flat glass (for drinking water grade) or sanitary bottle glass (for the pool industry) and **Polish** it in an air collider tunnel and remove all silica dust. Next, we **Separate** the grains by size, and then **Recombine** the polished media in an Engineered Seven Grain Sizes Formulation to create the **State of The Art in Water Filtration Media**.

The result is the **Optimal Filter Media**, with the perfect balance between Filter Performance (down to 1 micron) and Retention Capacity (for far fewer backwash cycles). By combining 7-Grain sizes we create a non-stratifying **Anti-Compaction** media that is **Biofilm Free**, with a >97% Open Flow Channel that will rapidly repay your investment by; reducing pump energy demand, reducing backwash frequency and by ending the need for replacement. Warranted for 100 years, Nature Works; eliminates the need for gravel under layers, and allows for reuse after filter maintenance. Nature Works is a true industry game changer as a replacement for sand or inferior glass medias. There is a lot more to the Nature Works story. Call us today to begin the distribution conversation, attend one of our scheduled webinars or to request full technical data.

(317) 498 - 8333 | info@natureworks-na.com

Planning For An AI-Powered Future

Experts discuss the process of back-end planning and strategies for implementing AI into home building business processes.

BY VINCENT SALANDRO



Artificial intelligence was a hot topic at the 2025 International Builders Show (IBS), with numerous sessions dedicated to discussing the topic and exhibitors highlighting new-home AI technology across the operation spectrum. During the education session “Beyond the Product Demo: How Small Builders Can Navigate New Tech & AI Implementation,” panelists discussed how builders can evaluate their own processes and systems, identify areas technology can provide solutions, and effectively deploy new technology solutions.

“In 2024 and 2025, the AI tools have become much better. The text, image,

[and] audio, it feels more real,” said Barrett Davis, founder of HomeScribe.AI. “The next stage [of AI] is really coming. The milestones of AI — when you talk about the hype versus the reality — have hit the curve right now on reality. Now is the perfect time to plan, to play, and work on different pieces of your business because in the next year when AI is attached to [more powerful data centers], the world is going to change.”

Derek Schairer, founder of software solutions provider Foundation, highlighted the importance of simplicity and starting small with technology. He told attendees a first step to take before even

considering AI technology is mapping internal company processes throughout the value chain to better understand what is happening at all levels of the business and identify where AI technology could add value.

“One of the keys with AI — and technology in general — is start small. Identify highly repeatable and highly manual tasks that you can go in and have AI implementations simplify,” Schairer said.

He cautioned that new tools will not likely provide hours-saving solutions, but rather compounding changes to improve efficiency.



YOUR AUTOMATIC POOL COVER AUTHORITY™

Trusted by Pool Builders With More Automatic Pool Cover Installations Than Any Other Company



Cover Care, LLC is Your Automatic Pool Cover Authority.™ With fully-stocked local trucks, you can expect on-time, high quality automatic pool cover installations. We've got you covered.

Are you ready to simplify your auto-cover installations? Scan the QR Code Today! **866-639-5045**

Copyright © 2024 Cover Care, LLC All rights reserved. Cover Care, LLC does not have operations in CA.

“AI today is not going to come in and save the company eight hours a day. But, it can be compounding. You might be able to save a transaction coordinator who does the same repetition over and over 15 or 30 seconds a transaction,” Schairer said. “When you start to compound that over the course of days and months and years, that level of saving will free up that person to go be more efficient and do more things for your business.”

Wyoming home builder Nathaniel Lemon shared his experience and lessons learned over his 12 years as the founder of Smart Dwellings as a case study and cautionary tale on technology implementation. Lemon said not all technology is directly applicable for all builders and new technology cannot help fixing broken systems or processes and cannot be implemented seamlessly without the correct team members dedicated to ensuring their success.

“Do you know where you are trying to

go long-term? Looking for new technology is great, but that comes after you know where you want to be,” Lemon said. “If you don’t know where you’re going, AI will make you more efficient, but it may make you more efficient in the wrong ways.”

Schairer advised builders to take a “crawl, walk, run” approach to new AI technology and explore low-cost or no-cost AI solutions to familiarize themselves with capabilities before allocating capital to AI technology.

“Remember that behind the processes are humans. They are only going to change for two reasons: They are forced to, or they are incentivized to,” Schairer said. “You want them to be incentivized to change their processes. The software, the AI, the things that you are putting in place should be incentive enough because they should make their life easier and make them more efficient. The AI and software have to be incentive or else people just aren’t going to use it.”

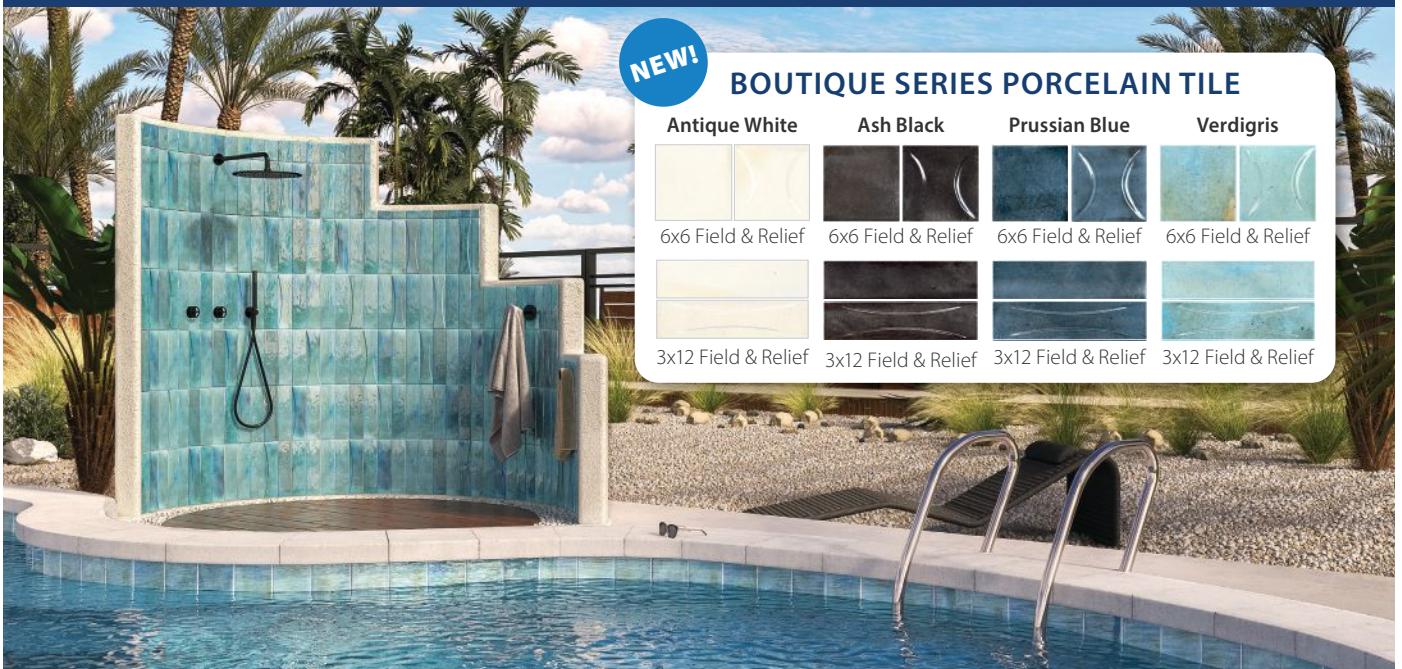
However, Lemon said the builders should not be too conservative and afraid to take chances and try new things with their business. Given the landscape for AI, which is set to accelerate in the next several years, there is time for companies to become early adopters of AI technology and reap to benefits now that several of the early kinks have been worked out.

“Don’t be afraid to take action and don’t be afraid to try something new. Don’t be afraid to fail,” Lemon said. “If you don’t start playing with some of these new things now, in a few years you’ll just be in the same place with the same problems, having the same conversations. Start working toward implementing something that makes sense for [your company], that is scalable [and] is right-sized for your growth.”

This article previously appeared in sister publication Builder.



Choose Luxury. Choose Durability. Choose Artistry.
No Cost Samples – Call Today!



NEW!

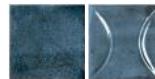
BOUTIQUE SERIES PORCELAIN TILE

Antique White

Ash Black

Prussian Blue

Verdigris



6x6 Field & Relief

6x6 Field & Relief

6x6 Field & Relief

6x6 Field & Relief



3x12 Field & Relief

3x12 Field & Relief

3x12 Field & Relief

3x12 Field & Relief

INSTALLATION SOLUTIONS

ARE POOL COVER INSTALLATIONS A PROBLEM WITH LABOR?

Rayner offers "FREE MEASUREMENTS" of any in ground pool and will install that cover for a minimal fee. Rayner will take full responsibility of the fit and installation.

Solution to a "Problem" Solved!

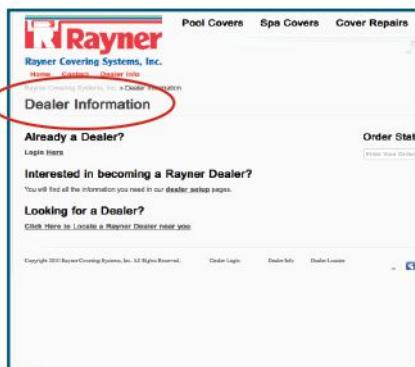


Getting the status of your pool cover orders is as easy as 1-2-3!
Visit the Rayner Website 24 hours a day for daily updates on the progress of your orders!



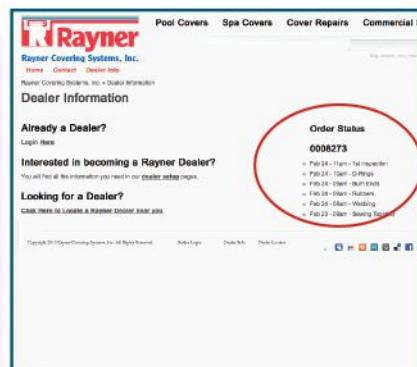
1

Enter the Rayner Website
www.RaynerCovering.com
from your Web browser.



2

Select the
Dealer Info



3

Enter the
Order Number

The Rayner Website displays the status of your order and when it is expected to be shipped. If your order has been shipped the Rayner Website illustrates your tracer number.

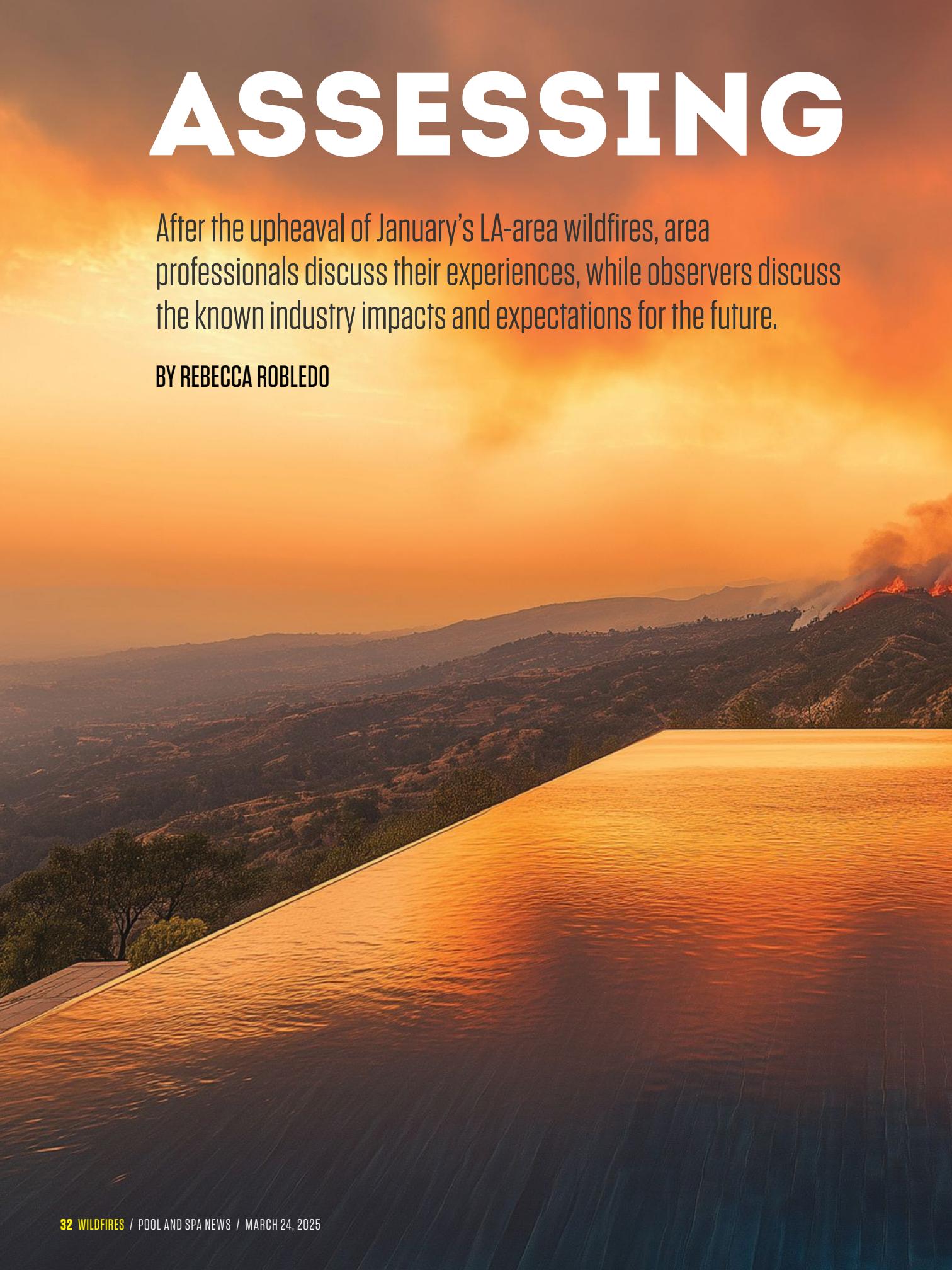


665 Schneider Drive, South Elgin, IL 60177
Ph: 847-695-2264 or 800-6480757 | Fax: 847-695-2363
info@RaynerCovering.com | www.RaynerCovering.com

ASSESSING

After the upheaval of January's LA-area wildfires, area professionals discuss their experiences, while observers discuss the known industry impacts and expectations for the future.

BY REBECCA ROBLEDO



THE DAMAGE



There's a house that would always catch the eye on the drive through Los Angeles' iconic Sunset Boulevard toward the picturesque Pacific Coast Highway.

Called the Robert Bridges House, after its architect and owner, the modern marvel was suspended in the air, thanks to a massive exposed concrete support structure. From the street, you would see the bold foundation, vertically oriented wood cladding and the horizontal orientation of the home. Seeming to almost hover over the hills, it was at once stark and warm.

After January's Pacific Palisades fires, what's left of the residence attracts attention and awe for completely different reasons. With an American flag draped over the surviving concrete underpinning, it provides a reminder at once bleak and hopeful to those who pass it — including the contractors and other workers charged with clean-up.

Rich Gallo, CEO of Los Angeles-based Pure Swim, has seen the monument since the early days, as he and his team have worked to meet with customers and clean up pools deep in the Palisades.

“Seeing that flag draped over the home ... It’s hard to unsee that,” Gallo says. “It’s reminiscent of the Pentagon from 9/11, which symbolizes that we’ve taken a hit and we’re down, but we’re going to come back ...”

As these professionals work and wait to help their clients recover, they wonder how long it will take and what to expect.

INITIAL CHAOS

Coming into the area as soon as they could after the fires, service techs had to process not only the work they may have lost and the daunting task of remediating pools for those whose homes survived. They had to do this while absorbing the devastation and loss suffered by the residents.

“In the beginning — if you were able to get in — it was very eerie,” says Richard Okamoto, president of the Independent Pool and Spa Association’s Westside Chapter, which covers the Palisades area. “Especially as a service person, you go down these streets, taking the same route every week. So to drive through these areas that had complete destruction ... it just felt like you’re driving in a scene out of a movie.”

And if you service several homes on one street, it especially became surreal. Eric Nielson, owner of Willow Creek Pools in West Hills, Calif., lost up to 22 pools.

“On one street we serviced about 10 pools, and seven of those houses are gone,” he said.

He saw a checkerboard effect where some homes survived but immediately neighboring abodes lie leveled. “It depended on the style — if they were more the Spanish style with tile roofs, they did a little better.” Those with plaster exteriors held up more, while those of predominantly wood roofs and construction did not fare well.

Pool/spa professionals did their

work among the chaos of other parties, including the Army Corps of Engineers assessing the wreckage and removing hazardous materials.

“[My employees] are working tremendous hours, six to seven days a week, 12- to 15-hour days,” Gallo says. “They’re going into areas that are questionable. We take all the precautions, but it’s still nerve-wracking to go into neighborhoods where the neighbors aren’t allowed for safety reasons.”

As much as the hours, confusion, red tape and frustration, pool professionals are managing the exposure to such devastation.

“As a descent human being, you can’t be immune to what others are suffering from,” Gallo says. “It puts it in perspective that this is a major devastation, and there are many people who are suffering because they’ve lost everything.

“It gives you a whole different level of gratitude when you come home and take your key out of your pocket, put it through your door, and walk into your house. The first thing you realize is you have a door ... and you have everything you need.”

TALLYING THE IMPACT

The industry continues to assess the financial losses taken by the industry so far.

Anecdotally speaking, the number of companies that have suffered a catastrophic loss of business or whose owners lost their homes seems low. Most hear of five to 10 service companies who fall in that category.

“Then I would say hundreds have been impacted by the loss of a few pools here and there within their normal routes,” says Jarred Morgan, vice president of professional and ancillary products for Hasa. The chemical producer has been a major sponsor for the Pool & Hot Tub Alliance’s California Fire Relief Fund. It also had to evac-

uate briefly from its Valencia, Calif., headquarters during one of the fires.

Some companies may not have lost routes, but suffered deceptively significant setbacks, perhaps losing the trucks and tools that made work possible.

Even with these setbacks, service companies have had to move forward through the chaos and red tape, attempting to gain the required documentation to access clients’ properties. In the meantime, many unattended pools became veritable swamps. But, in many cases, officials don’t allow draining, especially amid concerns about the chemicals used in the flame retardants that were sprayed over the areas. And without electricity, the water can’t be easily circulated.

“So you have to treat things chemically, which creates a lot more demand and excess chemicals than normally necessary,” Morgan says.

The pools can’t be drained until it’s possible to refill, for fear they could pop out of the ground, Nielson adds. “It could be a function of drilling holes in the bottom of the pools to relieve pressure,” he says. “Then you don’t want standing water in the pool, so you don’t have mosquito issues.”

When pools are left unattended and untreated for a while, Nielson has tried to place temporary fencing around them as soon as he could access the property.

Eventually many of the pools will need draining, and officials are suggesting they might need to impose a schedule for doing so.

“You’re going to have everyone trying to drain at the same time,” Okamoto says. “I think they’re going to start limiting everyone on drains.”

Nielson is basing his expectations somewhat on past experience. Five years ago, he lost five houses in the Malibu fires.

“It took four months before they



said go ahead and drain the water out,” he says. “The equipment’s gone; there’s no power; you have to bring in a generator or something to run a pump or filtration. So what do you do?”

He’s kept pools mosquito-free under such conditions for a year. “When there’s been no equipment, usually I have to bring in a pump to do some sort of filtration.”

Morgan reports an increase in demand for chlorine products, as well as muriatic acid, enzymes and chemicals used to fight phosphate. However, with the blazes and cleanup taking place so far ahead of the swim season, it hasn’t had an impact on availability. And considering this is a small area in the scope of the whole country, shortages are not expected, suppliers say.

CONSIDERING THE FUTURE

While the service sector has suffered the most immediate impact, all in the area will likely experience effects to their year.

Fortunately, no retail location is known to have burned down. However, stores exist in or near some of the neighborhoods that were leveled. So the industry waits to see what hap-

pens to them over the long run: How will they generate business in neighborhoods that sit virtually abandoned for the time being?

The building sector also finds itself with a large question mark hovering over it. Some pool/spa builders know they’ve been hit significantly because they’ve lost projects at various stages in their progress.

“Nobody said ‘This is going to submarine me,’” says Robert R. Rankin, vice president-west for Heritage Pool Supply Group. “But some have said, ‘I only build 25 pools a year, five of them were in that market, and four of them are gone.’”

In an area where builders tend to produce volumes of dozens rather than hundreds or thousands, those losses become year-altering.

“California is not the place where you have a 2,000-pool-a-year builder,” Rankin says. “This is a state of boutique builders. If you’re building 50 pools and all of a sudden 30 are pulled out from under you, that’s going to impact your business.”

At least as daunting: They may find themselves hamstrung as they try to replace those lost projects and

maintain decent numbers for the year. These builders have lost a substantial portion of their target market.

“A lot of builders are [saying], ‘A lot of zip codes just got knocked out of my line of sight, so how do I pivot out of the market,’” Rankin says.

While the industry doesn’t have hard data on the number of pools lost, all indications place it in the thousands. The two major fires affected high-end areas, especially in the Palisades, which counts the ultra-wealthy among its residents. Of the approximately 15,000 homes lost, many in the industry estimates that 8,000 had pools, Rankin said. But he believes it could reach closer to 10,000.

From talking to their clients, service techs are confident that the owners of these homes will want their pools back.

“It sounds like yes they all want a pool still, they want to redo it, but ... it feels like that’s going to be their last step,” Okamoto says.

At that point, Gallo expects to see COVID-era activity. “It’ll be a boom for anybody who’s licensed for California state,” he says. “Los Angeles won’t let them on site unless they have a Contractor State License Board license.”

But nobody knows when that will be, as it will depend on the decisions and actions of several external forces, including insurance companies, federal officials, local health officials and building departments.

And, given the financial hit the homeowners have sustained, it isn’t known how much they’ll be able to spend on their remodels and replacements.

“These homeowners are going to be in a different economy themselves than the rest of the city, state and country,” Gallo says. “It’s going to be a major adjustment for a lot of homeowners, and a lot of them will be extremely cautious on what they’re going to be spending on.”

How to Clean and Repair Swimming Pools and Spas After the Wildfires

Expert Terry Arko has added valuable information about damage caused by fires and how pool professionals can address it.

BY TERRY ARKO

No words can adequately express the condolences felt for those who have suffered loss during the recent wildfires.

But we can do our best to help clients through these ordeals, while protecting our own safety as well. Fires bring unique problems, which I will address here.

BEFORE THE FIRE

Protective gear such as respiratory mask, goggles and gloves may be required in these situations. It is prudent to carry some emergency supplies on your truck at all times. This could include bottled water, safety flares, a protective non-flammable blanket, a battery powered radio and flashlight.

Water pressure and water quality at the source will be affected during and after times of wild fires. For residents trying to protect their property, using the hose may not always be effective. In cases where water pressure becomes an issue during the fire, some fire departments may incorporate pumps in the pool to use the water for protecting homes. Homeowners in wildfire areas can also buy pumps that can be used to soak down their property. These pumps can typically work at a flow of 150 gallons per minute (gpm) and can disperse the contents of a 20,000-gallon pool within 2 hours.

Pool technicians should be aware

ahead of time of this possibility and check that hydrostatic relief valves are in place on these pools to prevent the vessels from popping out of the ground during these emergency use times. If the site has a high groundwater table or the pool is built over an underground spring, this could be a very real possibility.

DURING THE FIRE

In the case of active fires, the utmost concern should be for the immediate safety of persons and property.

In addition, it is vital to comply with the emergency management in the area. Service companies should never attempt to cross an emergency barrier or evacuation zone to deal with pools. Fire can change course and move rapidly especially in areas of high winds. If your route is anywhere near where fires are, make sure to have several planned escape routes thought out ahead of time.

Use extreme caution in areas where wildfires are active. Remember that wildfires can move fast and change course in seconds, so it is best to stay out of the area.

Avoid areas of heavy smoke where emergency crews are still set up. When necessary, wear smoke protection such as a breathing mask and goggles.

Water pressure and water quality at the source will be affected during and after wild fires.

In addition, live animals may seek

shelter in the pool or spa area. Do not attempt to deal with live wild animals on your own. Immediately contact your local animal control or wildlife management officials.

Use extreme caution in and around areas where wildfires are still active. Protective gear such as respiratory masks, goggles and gloves may be required.

AFTER THE FIRE

All types of debris are deposited in pools, spas and backyards during times of wildfires as result of high winds. Smoke, ash, tree branches, leaves and fire suppressant chemicals will all most likely end up in the pool.

Smoke and ash can be a problem for miles beyond the fire. In the summer of 2017, smoke from the fires in British Columbia spread all the way down to the Seattle Washington area. The airborne ash and debris affected many pools in the area. Some of the pools developed filter problems and bouts of algae.

Clean-up after a wildfire can take time and should be pursued with care.

Always check ahead of time with emergency management personnel before attempting to enter neighborhoods hit by fires.

Pay special attention to your surroundings at all times. Be aware of live downed power lines. In many cases in fire-damaged homes, the fire department will turn off the power. This is



done because wires may have melted or been fused from the heat. Be sure to check with the fire department before attempting to turn pump and filter breakers back on. Only a licensed electrical contractor should determine the integrity of the breakers for the pumps.

THE CONTENTS OF ASH

In the case of wildfires, there will be a lot of ash that ends up in pools. Ash from fires that burn lower than 840 degrees Fahrenheit is mostly organic carbon. At a higher temperature, the carbon is burned away and inorganic compounds are left. These include things like calcium, magnesium and sodium.

The fires in Northern California and the current fires in Southern California not only burned forest, but also homes and structures. Because the combustion rate is much higher for buildings, the make-up of the ash is much more different. At a very high combustion rate, the ash can contain potassium and calcium oxides which create quicklime. If enough of this ash gets into the pool and then to the filter, it can create a limestone cement coating on the filter media. Ash from homes and structures can also contain toxins such as lead, arsenic and hexavalent chromium. Most of the

ash that lands in pool water is also hydrophobic and repels water.

This explains why the ash floats and is so difficult to remove by skimming. Changing the charge of the ash by using a chitosan clarifier or an enzyme can help in the removal of the ash.

THE INGREDIENTS OF FIRE-FIGHTING SUPPRESSANTS

Most of the dry suppressants dropped on wild fires are made primarily of di-ammonium phosphate. The result of this is an increase in ortho-phosphate ending up in the waterways and in swimming pools. Phosphate in pools leads to many water quality issues and can combine with calcium to form calcium phosphate scale on heat exchangers.

In 2003, the Cedar Fire in San Diego California was one of the biggest wildfires in California history. After that fire, pool service professionals reported a very high spike in phosphate levels in pools. This could have been in direct relation to the large amounts of phosphate-based suppressants that were dropped in the area.

POOL CLEAN UP IN FIRE ZONES

Swimming pools in fire areas will contain ash, debris, firefighting

chemicals and toxins. It is best when allowable to drain and re-fill the pool.

The components of smoke from fire can cause severe lasting damage to equipment and structures. Inspect the integrity of the pool walls, plaster, the pipe fittings, decking and surrounding landscape.

In addition, the chemistry of the pool will be adversely effected. Smoke is corrosive and oxidative. It will cause severe damage wherever it has settled. If equipment and decking are covered in ash and smoke, continue to use caution. Wear personal protective equipment and a breathing apparatus as well as gloves. There are many toxins in smoke and ash residue that can cause sickness. The best case is to allow professionals to deal with excessive clean up situations.

OUTSIDE IMMEDIATE FIRE ZONES

In cases where homes were not damaged but were in a vicinity to the fire, the following steps can be taken. A regimen of shock, floc, enzyme, phosphate removal and algae prevention makes for a good remedial treatment:

- Remove all larger debris in the pool and/or spa as soon as possible.
- Brush all surfaces thoroughly.

- Skim small material with a pool net.
- Make sure filters are clean and in operational order.
- Inspect all equipment.
- Super-chlorinate to 20 parts per million (ppm) or use a quality chlorine-free oxidizer.
 - Follow immediately with a clarifier to help send small ash material to the filter.
 - Consider using an enzyme to help break down some of the non-living, organic material that can't be filtered.
 - Most firefighting suppressants such as those dropped from the air contain phosphate. Be sure to test and treat for phosphates once the chlorine levels dip below 5 ppm.
 - Follow with a broad spectrum algicide.
 - Clean filters as necessary throughout this process. They may need to be backwashed and cleaned frequently during this time.

FURTHER CAUTIONS

The after effects of wildfires last longer than immediate clean-up and repair.

For instance, the extreme heat from the fires can cause the ground to bake, bakes the soil forming a solid layer that causes it to repel water. This is a condition known as hydrophobicity. When rains come, the hydrophobic condition of the soil increases the rate of water run-off. Water can concentrate in these areas causing erosion.

Additionally, excessive erosion from firefighting efforts could lead to flooding and mud flows during rains. Pool areas should be protected with sand bags or other diversion methods immediately after fires to prevent an influx of mud and flood water from entering the pool.

Pools that have been drained will need to be inspected for damage to surfaces and deck areas as well as all equipment connections.

Terry Arko has more than 40 years' experience in the recreational water industry, working in service, repair, retail sales, chemical manufacturing, technical service, commercial sales, and product development. He has written more than 100 published articles on water chemistry. He is a member on the board of the Recreational Water Air Quality Committee (RWAQC). He is also a Certified Pool Operator instructor with the Pool Hot Tub Alliance (PHTA). He current works as Technical Content and Product Training Manager for HASA.



PHOTOS COURTESY ERIC NIELSON

TARA



TARAPRO
REWARDS PROGRAM

REWARDS MADE EASY

With the Tara Pro Rewards Program, you earn points for every vinyl liner, safety cover or sun shade you order. Use those points to get gift cards, tools and exclusive rewards. It's easy to sign up and start earning right away!

Get ahead of the liner season with rewards that work for you. Visit www.tarapools.com/pro-rewards to get started.



VINYL LINERS



SAFETY COVERS



SUN SHADES

Scan the QR Code
to Learn More



WWW.TARAPOLS.COM



866-725-8272



ADMIN@TARAMFG.COM

COMMERCIAL OR RESIDENTIAL?

With short-term rentals on the rise, professionals wonder. Attorneys offer advice for protecting end users and yourself.

BY REBECCA ROBLEDO

Service professional Adam Morley and his team didn't know why they couldn't stay on top of the water quality in one of their pools.

"We were saying, 'How are we having so much trouble keeping that water right? It's not a tiny pool,'" recalls the vice president of Paradise Pool and Spa Service in Harbor City, Calif. "We were just struggling."

It was a coincidence that they learned the pool was listed on a short-term rental website. "One of my route managers was on the site and said, 'Hey, that's one of the pools we do,'" he says.

If he knows a pool is being rented through a site such as Swimply, or sits on a short-term-rental property listed on a site like Airbnb, Morley has his terms. "We only knowingly take them on if they operate as a commercial pool — two to three times per week, [paying] any additional chemical expenses," he says.

He explained this to the homeowner: "We said, 'You have all these people coming in ... you can't service it once a week.'" With that, the relationship ended.

Walking the line between residential and commercial, these properties confound many pool companies, who don't always know what codes to observe. Here, attorneys offer advice on how to safeguard end users and protect your company.

THE CONUNDRUM

Observers have seen plenty of cases involving drownings on short-term rental properties. But given the lack of statistics, it isn't known how many or how the rates would compare with other settings. In the last two years, attorney Michael Haggard has handled approximately six such cases.

He sees a pattern. "We have had several cases where it occurs within the first 24 hours of their stay," says the managing partner of The Haggard



Law Firm in Coral Gables, Fla.

Some renters have little experience around pools and aren't familiar with safety measures. For residential pools, we count on homeowners to guide friends and family on safe usage. With commercial pools, we have signage and stepped up safety measures. But with short-term rentals, you have neither, says Steve Getzoff, who serves as outside national counsel for the Pool & Hot Tub Alliance, and a partner in New York-based Lester Schwab Katz & Dwyer.

It's become enough of an issue that at least two states are considering legislation to address it — Oregon and Washington, says Haggard, who has been approached by officials in other states as well.

PHTA is considering whether to include the care of such pools in its standards, Getzoff says.

PROCEED WITH CAUTION

If a company doesn't know the property is being used for short-term rentals, it likely could not be held liable for any incidents, these experts say. If you do know, you can take certain precautions.

You might consider addressing the issue in your service contracts. "I might put [something] in my contract saying that this property is not being rented" Getzoff says.

At least as important, service contracts should very clearly outline what the company is and is not responsible



for, he adds. “It should say they’re not responsible for fencing, alarms, diving boards, anything structural or anything like that,” Getzoff says. “[Something like,] ‘We’re here to maintain the water on a weekly basis, to open and close the pool. We’re not responsible for X, Y and Z.’ With that, they should be protected because the company has the right disclaimers.”

Do not include broad promises in the contract. For instance, don’t promise your company will keep the water clean. Otherwise, if the pool is being rented without your knowledge, and clarity problems arise between calls, you could be held liable.

“Sign a contract to perform a service at a certain frequency and whatever the service includes,” Getzoff says. “It comes down to having the right limiting language on the service agreement.” Of course, run any such language past your attorney.

Builders might consider disclaimers as well, to protect themselves in case warranty issues come up from the higher usage these pools can undergo. “One of the things that I think a builder should consider is maybe a disclaimer saying that if this pool is used in a commercial manner, then all warranties are void,” Getzoff says.

Of course, if your jurisdiction classifies these properties as commercial, then they must comply

with commercial codes. But Haggard recommends care even if short-term rentals are deemed residential.

Present the client with recommendations for how the pool should be treated, maintained and/or built to protect users and help ensure longevity, he says. “I would say, ‘If I were you, I’d build it like a commercial pool to protect myself,’” he says.

He suggests recommending measures such as depth markers, shepherd’s hooks, signage saying there’s no lifeguard on duty — even a defibrillator and phone. “It doesn’t mean the host is going to listen, but it’s a best practice,” he says.

If the homeowner chooses against your advice, have them sign a document saying as much. Haggard, who has represented many victims in pool-related lawsuits, sees this as the best way to avoid litigation, or be excused from a case quickly. “I would want to be able to say, ‘I told them to do X, Y and Z. They said no. Here’s the letter.’ I think that’s a great defense,” he says.

However, that doesn’t mean you should provide advice outside your scope of expertise. Keep any advice to the pool and its operation, recommends attorney Benjamin Ost.

“I recommend against giving advice that could be construed as legal advice,” says the attorney with Decatur, Ga.-based firm Dorough & Dorough. “If the owner says, ‘Do you think I should get it insured?’ I would only say, ‘You should talk to your broker about that.’”



EMPLOYEES AT THE CENTER

This contractor and author explains the lynchpin of his company's culture and how it contributed to his financial freedom.

BY DAVID GERSTEL



ADOBE STOCK



Half a dozen years into my career, an older and wiser builder showed me that if I put my mind to it, I could rapidly make my way to financial independence. Work then would be a choice, not a necessity. I'd rise every day free to do what I liked, unfettered by monetary necessity.

That sounded good to me. I went for it. Likely my thinking and strategizing was not quite so clear in my mind as I see it in retrospect. But I did know that I wanted to stay in construction. I liked the work, from bidding and estimating to orchestrating the trades and driving nails at a jobsite. I liked the camaraderie among workers and builders, and felt valued when clients referred my company to their friends.

I could also see, however, that construction is, financially speaking, a marginal business. Failure rates are massive; consistent profits are hard to come by. I concluded that building a company with the intention of eventually selling it was not my best path to financial freedom. There was not likely to be a robust market for not-so-good businesses like construction companies. (Generally speaking, I was right. As I explain in my book, *Building Freedom: A Construction Pro's Path to Financial Independence*, selling a construction company is likely to be difficult but not likely to be lucrative.)

Instead of conceiving of it as an eventually marketable commodity, I viewed my construction company as a money pump. If run properly, it could pump out enough cash to provide me with adequate pay, reward my employees generously, build up capital reserves, and provide funds for the investments that would set me free.

SMART FRUGALITY

My design for that company rested on two principles, both expressions of frugality. First, it was lean. And I mean really lean. No overhead cost was incurred that was not essential

to support high-quality production at jobsites. And that "lean" does not even imply "mean." Worthwhile frugality is about caring, careful, efficient, and effective use of resources. It is not miserliness.

The second underlying principle for my business emphasized creation of an "employee centered" company. Employees make up a construction company's most precious resource. Investing in them is smart frugality.

A fellow builder — I call him Sam in *Building Freedom* — underscored the two principles with his tart observations of a construction company that was attempting to recruit him for a management position. When he arrived, the CEO toured him through what Sam describes as the company's "Taj Mahal" facilities: an expansive warehouse. A large office building featuring post-and-beam construction. A dozen rooms for staff, meetings, and product displays. To Sam, it all looked like a lot of questionable overhead.

After the tour of the facility, Sam was handed over to the company's project manager and taken out to jobsites. There he got an impression not of lavish spending but of stinginess. The project manager himself, Sam learned, was a self-taught carpenter with thin knowledge of construction. None of the guys on his crews had enough time in the trades to qualify as journeymen. The project manager complained to Sam about the endless mistakes his inexperienced crews were making. But Sam saw that they were working from plans that were woefully shy on the details needed for construction.

Sam came away from his visit disappointed in the company and its allocation of resources. He shares my view that a construction company is not a creature with an exoskeleton. It does not derive its strength from a trophy office and the like. Its strength is internal, coming from the motivation and capability of its workers. What

MY OWN PREFERENCE FOR EMPLOYEE-CENTERED PRACTICES DOES ARISE FROM A BELIEF THAT WORKERS DESERVE A GENEROUS SHARE OF THE REWARDS THAT ACCRUE TO THE COMPANY THAT THEIR WORK SUSTAINS. BUT IT IS EQUALLY BASED ON SELF-INTEREST. I UNDERSTAND THAT AN OWNER BENEFITS BY EMBRACING EMPLOYEE-CENTERED PRACTICES.

Sam had been toured through, however, was a company with an elaborate shell and weak muscles.

I know from responses to my past articles that my pro-worker principles, like my advocacy of transparency, may irritate some readers. They view such ideas as inappropriate for our industry and worse. I respect and have considered their perspectives. At the same time, I think it's worth noting that the founders of iconic corporations like L.L.Bean, Hewlett Packard, and Costco, as well as many highly regarded builders, chose to create employee-centered operations. They saw the benefits to their companies and to themselves.

My own preference for employee-centered practices does arise from a belief that workers deserve a generous share of the rewards that accrue to the company that their work sustains. But it is equally based on self-interest. I understand that an owner benefits by embracing employee-centered practices. I want those benefits.

EMPLOYEE-CENTERED PRACTICES

Before reviewing the benefits to owners, let's take a look at a few of the practices that are embraced by employee-centered companies. They are of two basic types. Those at the surface involve time and money. An employee-centered company aims to provide its employees with a compensation package at or near the top end for its local market. It provides good wages and as full a complement of benefits as it can manage, from medical insurance through paid vacation days.

In the employee-centered company, pay for the employees at times takes precedence over pay for the owner. During the brutal recession that set in around 2007, two companies I know well were having such a hard time winning bids that they had to offer their employees a tough choice: Take a substantial pay cut, or have no work

at all. But before offering that choice, the owners sharply reduced their own pay — at one of the companies, to zero.

In my own company, good pay was supplemented by profit sharing. And the profit shares were substantial. They amounted to 15% of the top-of-market wages that my employees earned.

An additional benefit that I emphasize is the operation of safe work sites. Employee-centered companies steadily invest money and time in the safety of their people. At their work sites, you see steel scaffolding, not shaky staging assembled from left-over framing lumber. You see sturdy pro-grade ladders, not those flimsy contraptions from the local hardware store that caters to homeowners. The sites are swept up, not littered with tripping hazards.

Though required by law, safety is largely ignored on many jobsites. Workers suffer horrible injuries. Maintaining safety takes time. And it costs money. Abiding by and even exceeding the legal requirements for safety is a benefit companies too often deny their employees.

An unusual benefit that I favor has to do with time. It ranks with maximal profit-sharing as the employee-centered practice that provides the greatest mutual value to employees and owners.

That practice is use of the four-day workweek — namely, four days of work followed by three days off. My employees worked for nine and one-half hours each day during four days of the week, typically Monday through Thursday. Then they were off Friday through Sunday. Our 4/3 week was flexible: If they liked, a crew could work Monday through Thursday one week and Tuesday through Friday the next. Thereby, they could open up a four-day window of free time for themselves.

Underlying all these concrete benefits, from good pay through the 4/3 week, is a less tangible but crucial benefit: respect. Good pay says to an

AN UNUSUAL BENEFIT THAT I FAVOR HAS TO DO WITH TIME. IT RANKS WITH MAXIMAL PROFIT-SHARING AS THE EMPLOYEE-CENTERED PRACTICE THAT PROVIDES THE GREATEST MUTUAL VALUE TO EMPLOYEES AND OWNERS.

THAT PRACTICE IS USE OF THE FOUR-DAY WORKWEEK — NAMELY, FOUR DAYS OF WORK FOLLOWED BY THREE DAYS OFF.



AT THE EMPLOYEE-CENTERED COMPANY... IT'S NO LONGER "CUSTOMERS COME FIRST" AND "THE CUSTOMER IS ALWAYS RIGHT." CUSTOMERS ARE SERVED WITH GREAT CONSIDERATION, OF COURSE. BUT IT IS THE EMPLOYEES WHO COME FIRST. IN FACT, IF THERE IS A CONFLICT BETWEEN A CUSTOMER MAKING AN UNFAIR DEMAND OF AN EMPLOYEE (OR TRADE PARTNER) WHO IS DOING THE RIGHT THING, YOU BACK YOUR PEOPLE.

employee, "You are valued." Poor pay is demeaning. It says, "You are not worth much to me."

Likewise, investment in safety expresses respect — especially if presented as such: "You guys are essential. We can't have you unable to work. We need to do all that we can to prevent injuries."

The 4/3 week emphatically expresses respect. It recognizes that employees have responsibilities and pleasures beyond their jobs and that you have cleared as much space for that as you can.

It should go almost without saying that at the company that emphasizes respect for employees, disrespect is not allowed. No sneering put-downs of apprentices when they make mistakes, but instead helpful instruction on doing the task properly. No demeaning remarks about personality traits. Absolutely no racist, misogynistic, or similar slurs. (None of which precludes playful bantering between workers who have long known one another and enjoy camaraderie at the jobsite.)

BUSINESS COSTS AND BENEFITS

At the employee-centered company, an old business adage has been set aside. It's no longer "customers come first" and "the customer is always right." Customers are served with great consideration, of course. But it is the employees who come first. In fact, if there is a conflict between a

customer making an unfair demand of an employee (or trade partner) who is doing the right thing, you back your people.

That can inflict short-term cost. During my career on a few occasions, I pushed back hard against clients demanding way too much of my trade partners and project leads. Though we did great work for those clients, they never recommended us to anyone (which makes them nearly unique among our clients).

But the investment in the employees and trade partners paid off. They stayed with our company for many years, producing great work and helping to win many referrals to good projects. Had I stuffed the clients' demands down their throats, I would have soured our relationship. They may have moved on. Top-notch tradespeople can pick and choose who they will work with.

For an owner who structures and maintains an employee-centered company, the rewards can be tremendous. Your employees become proprietors. They think of the company as theirs, too, because it is. I felt I'd made progress toward creating an employee-centered company when my crew began referring to it as "our company."

When it is their company, employees take good care of it — especially of its second most valuable asset, its clients. The clients become, in response, the company's sales force. In our case, they gave us so many strong recommendations that we had to do no other

Superior Liners

Our Standard liner uses 27 mil walls and 20 mil floors, giving greater longevity above the water line where you need it while allowing the liner to stretch into place more uniformly where you want it. Our proprietary manufacturing process allows us to create the flattest seams and bulge-free corners. All of our liners are backed by a 25 year warranty — one of the best in the industry.



Robust & Smart Safety Covers



Inventor of The Pool Bladder™



RUNNING AN EMPLOYEE-CENTERED COMPANY IS KIND OF LIKE PARENTING. THOUGH IN OTHER KINDS OF TESTS YOU CAN SCORE 100 OUT OF 100 POSSIBLE POINTS, THE HIGHEST SCORE ANYONE HAS EVER GOTTEN AT CONSTRUCTION COMPANY MANAGEMENT, AS AT PARENTING, IS PROBABLY AROUND 70. BUT THAT PERFORMANCE, IT TURNS OUT, IS OKAY.

marketing. None. And that was a substantial frugality that enhanced the availability of cash for profit-sharing and freedom-granting investments.

In the employee-centered company, turnover can virtually disappear. Along with it, huge costs disappear: Time spent finding and interviewing possible new employees. Training of new employees. Integrating them with established crew. Correcting the damage when you hire the wrong new person.

In my own company, turnover was virtually nonexistent. No key person ever left voluntarily. That is not attributable to my personality. No one has ever accused me of being a particularly nice guy. I'm not. Though I steadily encouraged my employees and expressed appreciation for their work, I am assertive and demanding. I tried to give a lot but also expected a lot. I ran a tight ship. To my way of thinking, that's part and parcel of running an employee-centered company. If you don't, the company fails. And then the employees lose their jobs.

CULTURE TO STAY FOR

My way of doing things is not everyone's cup of tea, but for me, running an employee-centered company worked.

My employees stayed because of our company culture. For the respect our practices manifested. For the good pay and safe work sites. Because of the profit-sharing. And for the 4/3 week that made room in their lives for their priorities beyond exercise of their craft.

The 4/3 week produced benefits for my company as well as for the employees. It saved money since jobs had to be set up and closed down 20% less of the time than with a standard 5/2 week. Having projects under construction four rather than five days a week reduced pressure on me. It reduced pressure on clients when we were working at their homes and, thereby, enhanced their desire to recommend us.

It is probably too much to say, as I have heard said of another employee-centered construction company, that my employees and I were a "band of brothers." But it has been gratifying to me that I still regularly hear from former employees. Just the other day I got a note from one who wanted to thank not just me but all our co-workers for teaching him how to build and run a construction operation. He is now doing well with his own business on the northwest coast.

Such appreciation means as much to me as my financial freedom. Both rewards were generated by our employee-centered principles. That's the secret sauce, along with frugality. If I run a line from my beginnings in construction as a carpenter to my financial freedom, it runs straight through the employee-centered practices I have described here.

Not that I got things right all the time. Far from it. Running an employee-centered company is kind of like parenting. Though in other kinds of tests you can score 100 out of 100 possible points, the highest score anyone has ever gotten at construction company management, as at parenting, is probably around 70.

But that performance, it turns out, is okay. It delivers a lot to your co-workers and your clients. And it can deliver a great deal to you, including eventually the great privilege of enjoying financial freedom.

This article originally appeared in sister publication JLC. David Gerstel has been a builder for more than four decades and is the author of Running a Successful Construction Company (often cited as an industry bible) and Nail Your Numbers: A Path to Skilled Construction Estimating and Bidding. His most recent book is Building Freedom: A Construction Pro's Path to Financial Independence.

VISIT OUR BOOTH

AT OUR UPCOMING TRADESHOWS!

waterproof IP67

the
POOL & SPA
show

BOOTH 3231

Southwest
Pool & Spa Show

BOOTH 235



EVERYTHING
UNDER THE
SUN EXPO

BOOTH 404

Watch live demos & get free samples!



NSF

Certified to
NSF/ANSI Standard 50

eXact® **EZ**

12.1
ppm

READ

MENU

ZERO/ON

Pool

sensafe.com

SWIM CHECK FIX[™] PHOSPHATE

PHOSPHATE REMOVING TABLETS FOR POOL

No Liquids! No Flocc! No Cloudy Water!

Swim Check Fix[™] Phosphate is the innovative and hassle-free solution to effectively remove phosphates and maintain crystal-clear water. Easy-to-use phosphate removing tablets ensure a stress-free experience for pool owners.

**Lowers Phosphates
Up to 500ppb!**



POOL
CHECK
Xpress

Award Winning Product!

The PoolCheck Xpress series introduces a unique feature: a color chart printed directly on the strip just below the test pads.

Forget about carrying bottles or charts; the safe range indicators are right on the strip, the first of its kind. It tests for the 3 most crucial pool parameters (Total Alkalinity, Free Chlorine and pH).



Detects

- > Total Alkalinity
- > Copper
- > Calcium Hardness
- > Cyanuric Acid
- > Chloride (as salt)
- > pH
- > Free Chlorine
- > Phosphate
- > Total Chlorine
- > Combined Chlorine

Pool eXact® **EZ**

The NSF/ANSI 50 LI Certified Pool eXact® EZ with Bluetooth® photometer tests for 10 pool water parameters with lab quality results!

10% OFF
EVERYTHING

USE CODE AT CHECKOUT

AQUATIC10



Industrial Test Systems, Inc.

Innovators of Water Quality Testing

800-861-9712 | sensafe.com | its@sensafe.com



@ITSSensafe

@sensafe ITS

@sensafe

@sensafe

@sensafe

TILE EN VOGUE

Exterior design often takes its cue from indoors. With that in mind, take inspiration from these Top 10 home tile trends for 2025.

BY SYMONE STRONG



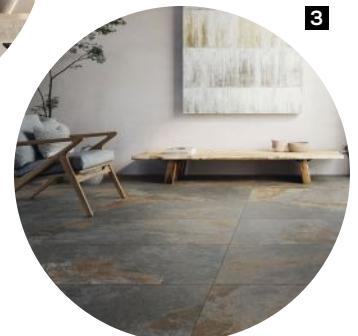
This year's top trends in are making waves — literally.

From sand-inspired hues to water-world aesthetics, 2025 is all about embracing nature, texture, and innovative technology, according to Coverings, the ceramic tile and natural stone trade show.

In commemoration of National Tile Day and ahead of the showcase, scheduled for April 29 to May 2 in Orlando, Fla., three Coverings sponsors and international tile associations — Ceramic of Italy/Confindustria Ceramica, Ceramic Tile Manufacturers Association of Spain/Tile of Spain, and Tile Council of North America — highlighted 10 current themes from the worldwide tile industry.

Coverings spokesperson Alena Capra, owner of Alena Capra Designs, collaborated with the associations to forecast these trends, which are expected to dominate tile design and installation decisions throughout the year and beyond.

Learn more about the 10 tile trends of 2025.



1. COLORS OF SAND: With a warm and calming palette, sand-like colors are earnest and neutral, portraying the essence of a natural and earthy environment. The design and installation options of colors inspired by sand are limitless, as evidenced by nearly infinite product selections seen in widely popular indoor and outdoor applications.

2. DISCRETE TECH: As artificial intelligence (AI) and smart home technology advance, the domestic automation sector is also rapidly growing. Modern tiles now incorporate features such as pressure-sensitive LED lighting and induction cooking, making it easier to blend technology with elegant design.

3. HOLISTIC EXPERIENCE: As the integration of technology in residential settings continues to rise, there is a growing desire to incorporate natural elements into built environments. Advancements in digital technology enable the realistic recreation of organic details, ensuring that both the cladding and greenery in a space provide a rich biophilic experience.

4. LINES, LINES, LINES: This season, it's all about lines. Whether it be striped, ribbed, or fluted looks, these decorative details create dynamic volumes and plays of light and shadow, adding depth and character into a space.

5. MINERAL DRENCHING: Color drenching takes a bold turn with the use of gauged porcelain panels. Enveloping entire spaces in the rich tones and textures seen in marble, onyx, or travertine creates a seamless and dramatic effect.

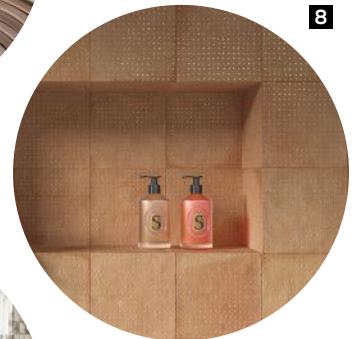
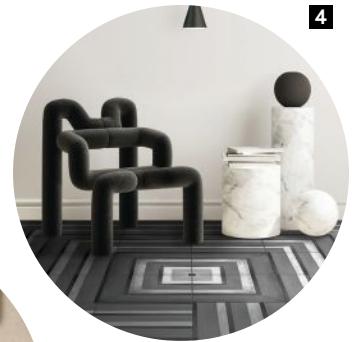
6. MOSAIC ARTISTRY: Mosaics have long combined beauty and functionality, allowing designers to create personalized patterns and statements. Today, mosaics are having a resurgence. Whether handcrafted or large-format, mosaic styles continue to transform surfaces large and small into captivating focal points.

7. RE-HUMAN: In an age with AI and algorithms, there is a revived longing for the tactile, human experience. As such, tile surfaces are increasingly drawing inspiration from materials such as corrugated paper, torn fabric, textile design, and handcrafted wooden textures.

8. SENSORIAL DESIGN: Interior designers are going beyond the visual spectrum to curate spaces that engage all five senses. Ceramic manufacturers can now perfectly replicate natural textures and patterns, creating tiles with enhanced tactile and visual experiences.

9. VEINS OF GOLD: The opulence of marble-look tile is elevated to brilliant new heights with a touch of gold. Creamy stone looks, accentuated by rich golden veining radiate warmth, bringing a touch of luxury to any setting.

10. WATER WORLD: Water spurred major inspiration across contemporary ceramic design this season, flooding the scene with color palettes of soft aquas to deep sea hues. Patterns, textures, and fluid, smooth forms reminiscent of waves are brought to life through three-dimensional reliefs, traditional brushstrokes, masterful glazing techniques, and distinct shading effects.



THEMATIC CONNECTION

These waterpark theming trends provide inspiration for smaller commercial and large residential projects.

BY REBECCA ROBLEDO

Those with commercial clients may have noticed that, in the ongoing effort to attract as broad a swath of visitors as possible, owners and operators of aquatics facilities want more than the traditional rectangular pool. In fact, most new commercial projects include elements inspired by waterparks.

But as waterpark designers see it, that magic involves more than the infinite combinations of water, volume, speed and gravity. These specialists infuse their creations with themes that connect with people of all ages.

Theming has become such a priority that Orlando-based Martin Aquatic Design & Engineering spun off a separate company focused on this specialty, called Ectovox Consulting.

“More and more people are interested in something that’s more of an experience than just waterslides — they want something more like a theme park,” says Kerry Martin, president and strategic director for Ectovox. “They want to escape their real-world lives and go into a park that makes them feel a little bit different.”

In an era when even birthday parties are themed within an inch of their lives, this makes sense. Theming provides a thread tying all elements together, leaving an end product that transports visitors to a new, potentially exotic locale.

But it requires more than placing bright,

cartoonish characters and structures around water. Users want an experience. These days, that often includes a fully formed storyline.

“Theming just for theming’s sake ... we don’t see that quite as much,” says Brian Beckler, senior principal with OLC, a Denver-based architecture, interior and aquatic design firm. “It’s not just ‘Let’s come up with some fun ideas.’ There’s usually an end game. They want to create a special experience; they want people to come to their facility and stay longer.”

Whether you’re helping design or renovate a commercial pool — or seeking inspiration for that high-end client looking for a backyard waterpark — there’s plenty to learn from these designers, who share current theming trends.

WATERPARKS ARE MOVING AWAY FROM CLASSIC THEMES

Whimsical water motifs, such as “under the sea,” or those incorporating tropical/Hawaiian and pirate aesthetics have been a mainstay throughout the history of water attractions.

In a study Ectovox did of more than 400 clients with themed waterparks, nearly two-thirds fit into these categories. These often are the easiest, most economical to create, given the amount of products and equipment that can be ordered straight out of a catalog to align with them.



PHOTO COURTESY AQUATIC DEVELOPMENT GROUP



They don't offer much satisfaction, however, to clients looking to distinguish themselves.

Instead, waterparks designers seek themes that mean something to clients and end users. "I think having something that's true to where you are is always a good trend," Martin says.

For instance, more sites than ever build story lines around their cities or regions, honoring the area's history and culture. This differentiates the location and creates opportunities to educate and engage, creating an instant bond and point of pride.

As in residential applications, vacation-inspired themes are becoming more common among waterparks, says Ryan Snyder, director of creative design and product development for Aquatic Development Group, based in Cohoes, N.Y. Design teams may style waterparks to evoke an East Asian oasis, Balinese village, Brazilian Carnival or African expedition.

A subset of these exotic themes reflect the increasing awareness of sustainability, with eco-friendly and nature-inspired themes, such as "tropical rainforest" featuring lush landscapes, environmentally friendly materials and wildlife-related imagery.

Adventure and exploration themes, such as "lost civilization" or "underwater expedition" open the way to attracting thrill seekers and incorporating interactive experiences such as treasure hunts and exploration zones, Snyder observes.

SUBTLETY GOES A LONG WAY

Heavy theming isn't appropriate for all locations, so these designers see an increase in more light-handed approaches. This especially applies to high-end and luxury properties.

For instance, Beckler sees less color contrast. "Those facilities where everything has a different color — the carnival, bright neon look — we're not seeing that quite as often," he says.

Some prefer an environment that



inspires more calm. This could be especially appropriate if individuals on the autism spectrum will make up a substantial portion of users. Or perhaps a high-end demographic calls for a tranquil vibe.

Snyder has observed an increase in monotone color schemes meant to create a luxury or resort feel. They serve a distinct purpose today, he says.

"There's a lot coming at us — a lot of demands, visual interactivity, whether through electronics, the news or whatever it may be," he says. "So a monotone experience within a property or a zone could reinforce a level of calmness."

These often translate into a contemporary, sleek look. Instead of large play structures, moving water could come in the form of vertical sprays emerging from the zero-depth entry.

"They tend to tie those features with the architecture so the overall experience has a similar aesthetic," Beckler says.

TODAY'S THEMES CARRY MORE DIMENSION

Whatever the theme, Martin sees an evolution in how they're carried out.

Clients are moving toward more authentic looks and away from

cartoonish characters, she says. Recently, Ectovox and Martin Aquatic worked on a project called Serengeti Springs, which carries an African theme. But designers sidestepped the cartoon-type characters that mostly attract children, opting instead for more realistic animal imagery.

"Our clients are asking for something that speaks to a broader demographic and age range," Martin says.

That kind of authenticity is created by moving past the water attractions themselves, integrating authentic-looking architectural elements, building finishes, plants and trees. This way the theme is built into the architecture or structures rather than looking like added-on elements.

In fact, sometimes designers move completely away from characters and rely on color to set the theme. If your mission or budget don't allow for an intricate theme, a strong color scheme can serve a similar purpose, tying the elements together and setting a mood.

"Color is powerful," Snyder says. "Say you have a forest theme. It doesn't need to have trees around it — it could all be shades of green. Or if it's a mining theme, it doesn't necessarily need to have pick axes and barrels, it could be shades of tan, brown and gray."

Dive into fresh style and higher performance with a new liner from Merlin!

Scan the QR code for our full catalogue of captivating vinyl liner patterns and remember to

“MAKE MINE A MERLIN!”



Products certified to CFFA-P-101 have passed a series of test methods within CFFA's Recommended Minimum Performance Standards for Vinyl Swimming Pool Liners - In-Ground, which have been identified as important and relevant for the performance of in-ground vinyl swimming pool liners that are 20 mil or greater.



Expertly constructed with high performance North American vinyl!





Make a Splash in the Industry!

Start your journey with GENESIS® and join Rowdy Gaines in building a future of safe and stunning pools.



Join

Rowdy Gaines

U.S. Olympic Hall of Fame Member and Three-time Olympic Gold Medalist.

in Making Pools Safe and Beautiful — Become a Certified Builder Professional!

Certified Builder Professionals (CBPs) don't just build pools — they create masterpieces that are beautiful, durable, and safe.

Start your CBP journey today with GENESIS® courses, led by industry leaders and trusted by top builders. Plus, your enrollment supports the Step Into Swim program, teaching kids essential water safety skills.

Become the builder who sets the standard. Enroll now and build a legacy!



GENESIS
EDUCATE. CERTIFY. CONNECT.

“Safety is everything. As a three-time Olympic gold medalist, I’ve experienced pools of all kinds, from backyard retreats to Olympic venues. And when it comes to pools, safety starts before the first splash.” — Rowdy Gaines

Product Profiles: Safety and Disability/Access



OneMeasure by Anchor

OneMeasure by Anchor is a groundbreaking digital measurement tool designed to enhance the safety and accuracy of pool cover installations.

This innovative device uses a laser and camera combination to capture precise measurements quickly and efficiently, eliminating the need for manual tape measuring, chalking, or stepping into the pool.

OneMeasure is especially effective for complex pool layouts, including raised walls, cutouts, bridges, and cable installations, which traditionally require more than one AB line. The intuitive software guides the user step by step, making it easy to measure even the most challenging pool designs.

Built for durability, the OneMeasure tablet and device use the same charger and are designed to withstand tough job site conditions. The entire system operates without Wi-Fi during measurements, requiring only an internet connection for uploading final files.

Contact: Anchor Industries | anchorinc.com/onemeasure



Ranger 2 Pool Lift

The Ranger 2 Pool Lift by Aqua Creek Products is a high-quality, affordable ADA-compliant lift designed to provide safe and independent access to pools and spas.

With a 350-pound weight capacity, it offers a sturdy and reliable solution for users needing assistance entering and exiting the water. The lift operates via a simple, user-friendly handset, allowing for smooth and controlled movement in and out of the pool. Its durable, powder-coated stainless steel construction ensures long-lasting performance, even in harsh aquatic environments.

The Ranger 2 is also a versatile option, compatible with a variety of anchoring systems, making it easy to install in different pool deck configurations.

Technical support is available by calling 888-687-3552.

The Ranger 2 is supported by a 5 year limited warranty.

Contact: Aqua Creek Products | aquacreekproducts.com



Hydramatic Automatic Safety Cover

The motors of Aquamatic's Hydramatic covers run on hydraulic pressure rather than electricity. That means one-fourth the moving parts, no lubrication, and ropes that self-adjust, says Tom Dankel, company vice president.

The Hydramatic's modular design takes only four bolts to assemble, making installation simple. Another time-saver is Aquamatic's patented cable compensator, which automatically aligns both sides of the cover as it extends and retracts. "Technicians are constantly telling us, 'I started your system up, and it worked right away with no fuss,'" Dankel says.

Every Aquamatic cover meets the ASTM F1346-91 safety standard and is custom-fitted down to the half-inch. Consumers can choose from 11 standard colors and six designer colors.

Contact: Aquamatic Cover Systems | aquamatic.com



Pool Lift Model IGAT-180

The IGAT-180 is Aquatic Access' most popular model for ADA compliance in public pools, and for independent residential use.

This portable, environmentally friendly lift is powered only by water from a hose or plumbed-in line, with a capacity of 400 lbs.

"The best things about this product are its simplicity, its reliability and durability," says company CEO Linda Nolan. "It's a green product, with zero energy costs. The water used to lift the seat is discharged into the pool on descent, replacing evaporated water. It's ready for use all day with no attention required, specified by the ADA, and with no energy expense. We have some customers who have had their lift over 30 years."

Included are the socket for deck installation, flip-up armrest, and a seat belt. Other options include a headrest and a chest belt.

Contact: Aquatic Access Inc. | AquaticAccess.com



Cover Care LLC Professional Auto-Cover Installation and Service

Cover Care, LLC, is a national, full service company specializing in installation and repair of automatic pool covers and removable fences.

Cover Care technicians are trained to install, service and repair all brands, makes and models of automatic pool covers.

The company has specialists in more than 50 major markets in the U.S., allowing any pool retailer, pool builder or pool service professional to partner with Cover Care in the installation and service of pools that include an automatic pool cover.

"We make it easy for pool professionals to subcontract out the installation and maintenance automatic pool covers, allowing pool pros to easily offer and profit from selling auto covers without having to train or have personnel on hand to maintain and install them," says Jacob Bloss, operation director of Cover Care LLC.

Contact: Cover Care LLC | cover-care.com



Coverlon Safety Cover

Offered in mesh or solid materials, these covers are available in a variety of colors. The solid covers come in natural, earth-tone colors of gray and tan, in addition to blue and green. Super-mesh comes in green, blue and tan; regular mesh is available in those colors, plus black.

The safety cover is fabricated with durable materials, and strapping on the top and underside — the entire length and width of the pool — making for a stronger, safer cover, notes Frank Patel, company owner/president. "Our regular spring is what other companies refer to as "heavy duty," he says. "Customers are pleased with the construction, especially for waterfeatures and complicated pools. They comment on the superior fit, construction and longevity of the covers."

Installed properly, children and pets cannot fall or accidentally slip into the pool. They also are tamper proof, requiring a special tool to remove or install.

Contact: The Cover Co. | coverlon.com



AquaticAccess.com

In our 37th year as the true leader in pool, spa, dock, and boat accessibility

**Water flows in - the seat goes up.
Water flows out - the seat goes down.**

Simpler is Smarter.

No electricity, batteries, charging, remotes, actuators, contacts, solar cells, motors, brushes, gears, oils, expensive components, or extensive maintenance.



“Our chair gets used at least 10-15 times daily and we never have any problems with it. It’s comfortable and reliable, the best one around. We absolutely love it at the center.”
Jessica Blechar, Caldwell NJ Community Center



800.325.LIFT 502.425.5817



PSN

Pool and Spa News

poolspanews.com

is your first stop for content to boost your pool/spa business, covering all facets from design and construction to maintenance and retailing.



Zonda Media



Swim Check Fix Phosphate Tablets

Swim Check Fix Phosphate Tablets are formulated to remove phosphates in swimming pool water. They are simple and easy to use.

“Add the tablet directly to the pool skimmer for efficient phosphate removal,” says Mike McBride, marketing manager for Industrial Test Systems. “It’s more affordable and longer lasting than liquid removers. One tablet lowers phosphates by over 500 ppb for 10,000 gallons.”

The patent-pending, time-release tablets are individually wrapped.

Technical support is available by calling 803-329-9712, and marketing materials are available on request.

The product comes with a 1-year warranty.

Contact: Industrial Test Systems | sensafe.com



Kayden Safety Covers

Kayden Premium Safety Covers are offered in three types of materials: a standard mesh that blocks 90% of UV light, a SunBlocker mesh that blocks 99% of UV light and a solid material that blocks 100% of UV light.

The springs are made from ultra thick gauge steel with non-slip, attached keepers for easy adjustment, and feature stay-put spring covers that won’t slip off. The webbing and thread are the strongest available with specialized stitching in every corner for strength.

The raised wall treatment is designed for easy installation as well as ease of opening and closing the pool.

The Kayden No Drag Cover Bags are more than big enough to fit the cover, no matter how it gets folded, and feature handles so the cover can easily be moved without having to drag it.

The covers are available in green, blue, tan, gray and black.

Contact: Kayden Mfg. | KaydenMFG.com



IMAGE-LOC Kit with GoPro

The IMAGE-LOC with GoPro Kit revolutionizes the way pool professionals measure for safety covers, eliminating the time-consuming and complex manual measuring process, says LOOP-LOC’s CEO LeeAnn Donaton.

“By utilizing a GoPro camera, this innovative system captures highly accurate measurements in just minutes, ensuring a guaranteed fit for every pool,” Donaton says.

The kit is designed for ease of use, requiring only one person to complete the measuring process with minimal effort. Unlike traditional methods, which can take hours and involve multiple people, IMAGE-LOC simplifies the process with cutting-edge technology that removes the guesswork.

Additionally, this system is drone-compatible, providing even greater flexibility and accessibility for pools with unique layouts or hard-to-reach areas.

Contact: LOOP-LOC | looploc.com



SmartMesh Safety Cover

The SmartMesh safety cover is Merlin's patented mesh pool cover with exclusive high-tech weave. This special feature means the SmartMesh safety cover offers 100% shade and debris filtration. With this high level of shade protection, algae growth will be significantly reduced, leading to a cleaner pool at opening.

Most importantly, the SmartMesh also offers high abrasion resistance, tear and burst strength to provide safety from falling into a pool when not in use. It is important to close up pools with a reliable pool cover to protect everyone, especially children, from injury.

"Customers are happy to have a product that will keep people and pets safe from falling or drowning in pools when they are not in use," says Rabia Danyaro, Merlin's marketing coordinator.

The SmartMesh safety cover comes with a 15-year prorated limited warranty.

Contact: Merlin Industries | merlinindustries.com



MeycoLite Winter Safety Cover

MeycoLite fabric was used in the original safety pool cover created by Meyco founder, Fred J. Meyer, Jr., and is the fabric of choice for some of the world's largest winter pool covers, says Phil Saltzman, Meyco's director of sales.

MeycoLite's weave eliminates the need for draining dangerous surface water, allowing rain and debris to naturally pass through while leaves dry up and blow away. Meycolite is treated for color fastness to minimize fading and requires minimal care over the winter.

"Meycolite also blocks 95% of the sun's rays, reducing UV damage to the pool area," says Saltzman.

Lightweight yet tough, MeycoLite outshines bulky, cumbersome tarps — making it easier and faster to install at the end of the swim season without sacrificing heavy-duty protection.

Contact: Meyco Pool Covers | meycocovers.com



POOL360 PoolService

PoolCorp's POOL360 PoolService software is designed for pool service businesses.

It offers leading route optimization, mobile water testing, automated billing and payments, integrated pricing with pool360 for installation and repairs, and more.

Contact: PoolCorp | pool360service.com



Pool Safety Cover

Rayner Covering Systems manufactures duplicate and custom pool covers.

The company uses materials such as mighty mesh, which offers 98% UVA/UVB protection; standard mesh, which offers 93% UVA/UVB protection; or solid vinyl, which provide 100% UVA/UVB protection.

All covers are webbed on top and bottom with 1-inch web that is double stitched with UVA/UVB-protected thread for durability.

Rayner offers free measuring and install (for fee) programs for pools as well as a repair program for existing covers.

"Individual attention is given to each customer for every order," says Richard Rayner, president. "Customers are very pleased with Rayner's ability to successfully cover very difficult or elaborate pools that other companies have turned down."

Rayner offers up to a 25 year warranty on covers depending on the material.

Contact: Rayner Covering Systems | raynercovering.com

HD Mesh Safety Covers

Tara's HD Mesh Safety Covers provide durability, safety and water clarity while keeping pools protected year-round, says Thomas Kennedy, Tara's marketing director.

"Engineered with a densely woven mesh fabric, these covers block 99% of sunlight, preventing algae growth and making spring openings easier," says Kennedy. "Unlike standard mesh covers, Tara's HD Mesh delivers superior strength without added weight, making installation and removal easier for pool professionals."

The lightweight yet strong material allows water to drain efficiently while keeping out debris, reducing maintenance.

Each cover is custom-made to fit the exact specifications of the pool, ensuring a precise, secure fit. Tailored solutions are possible for complex pool shapes, including features such as spillover spas, slides, handrails, and more.

Available in green, blue, tan, and now gray.

Contact: Tara Pool & Outdoor Products | tarapools.com

Ultra Vinyl Privacy - Aluminum + Vinyl Privacy Fencing

This low-maintenance privacy fence combines the durability of extruded aluminum top, middle, and bottom rails with rich, variegated-color vinyl panel inserts.

The Ultra Vinyl Privacy fence is available in 8-foot-by-6-foot-high sections, with options for 3- or 4-inch posts. It comes in four textured frame colors and is designed to accommodate any standard 7/8-inch-by-6-inch tongue-and-groove vinyl board. Many customers also opt for various 7/8-inch-thick wood species as an alternative to the traditional vinyl inserts.

Ultra Vinyl Privacy panels offer steel-like strength without the risk of rusting, and the gates feature fully welded frames with a patented design that allows easy installation of the infill by contractors.

Technical support is available by calling 800-656-4420.

Contact: Ultra Aluminum | ultrafence.com

PSN

Pool and Spa News

poolspace.com

is your hub to apply for our annual prestige programs, including Top 50 Builders and Service award programs, and Masters of Design.



Pump Shut-off System/ SVRS

Vacless' VGB-compliant SVRSs feature an electrical pump shut-off system with an alarm or siren, which instantly turns the pump off upon entrapment.

The SVRS is automatically resettable in 3 minutes, and features no nonsense programming, no false tripping, choice of air or no-air induction, and no by-passing for pool vacuum cleaning.

It installs in 5 minutes onto the pump in place of the suction side drain plug without the use of tools, and is designed for use with pumps of up to 25 horsepower.

"The best thing about this product is the easy installation, no nonsense programming and unquestioned reliability," says Hassan Hamza, Vacless' president.

Marketing materials and technical support are available.

The units are covered under a 3-year warranty.

Contact: Vacless Systems | vacless.com



 Zonda
Media

Product Profiles: Pool Finishing Materials



Dimension Series Morning Fog 2x4

Launched in January 2023, the new Dimension Series glass tile comes in three unique colors: Cirrus Blue, Dusk and Morning Fog. Matching 2x4 bullnose trim tile available for the most functional, professional and attractive way to finish corners and edges.

“This uniquely shaped glass tile is frost proof and will last a lifetime,” says Missy Kent, marketing coordinator for Artistry in Mosaics. “Our customers love this tile because of its unique shape.”

The company offers more than 100 stylish glass tile options from trendy to classic. Marketing materials can be requested by visiting artistryinmosaics.com/request-catalog.

Contact: Artistry in Mosaics | artistryinmosaics.com

Fiber Shield (FSV-20)

Fiber Shield (FSV) is a 100% vinyl-ester-based barrier coat designed to replace traditional skin coats, providing protection against osmotic blistering while reducing manufacturing time.

FSV creates a durable bond between the acrylic shell/gelcoat and bulk fiberglass layers, forming a highly effective barrier that prevents blistering — even under prolonged exposure to high heat and varying pH conditions. Unlike traditional skin coats, FSV is engineered for application without glass, offering two key advantages:

1. Enhanced Blister Resistance – FSV sprays on evenly, filling tight radii without creating air pockets.
2. Faster Production – FSV eliminates the need for rolling or sanding, streamlining manufacturing and accelerating build times. A single operator can spray a spa or pool in about five minutes, and it is ready for bulk lamination just 40 minutes after application.

Contact: Composite Technologies International | compositetechnologies.com

Finest Finish Blends

Finest Finish Blends is a product line of Universal White Cement, and offers a broad variety of swimming pool finishes in a wide array of colors and textures.

“The custom formulas in our proprietary cements, additives, natural stone aggregates and glass beads rely on thirty years of experience in the swimming pool finish industry,” says Astrid Petersen, a member of Universal White Cement’s sales and marketing team. “The ‘mix’ is what differentiates Finest Finish Blends pool interior finishes from others on the market.”

Thoughtfully designed custom recipes are given to the applicators with carefully crafted combinations of Universal White High-Performance Pre Mixed Cements, natural aggregates (marble, quartz, mini pebbles), enhanced with Pebble Radiance glass and abalone.

All of the ingredients of the pool interior finish are pre-blended into one bag.

Contact: Universal White Cement | finestfinishpools.com



HS-1 SL

Deck-O-Seal HS-1 SL is a one-part, self-leveling hybrid sealant, developed with silyl-modified polymer (SMP) technology. It cures under the influence of atmospheric moisture to form a medium modulus sealant with excellent adhesive properties and resistance to ageing and weathering.

HS-1 SL is designed for horizontal expansion joints in swimming pool decks, patios, and sidewalks. HS-1 SL is self-leveling and does not need to be tooled.

It is packaged in a convenient easy-to-use 32-ounce pouch, which eliminates the need of a caulking gun that is required when using cartridges. The pouch comfortably fits in the hand for easy application.

"The HS-1 SL has become a fan favorite very quickly," says Glenn Tench, vice president, sales and marketing for W.R. Meadows. "This new innovated pouch really makes a difference in the ease of application."

Contact: Deck-O-Seal/W.R. Meadows | deckoseal.com



Z Poolform

Z Poolform is a reusable PVC form used to create decorative concrete copings for pools.

Interchangeable Form Liners will allow for a variety of different edge profiles and textures not previously possible with pool coping forms.

Z Poolforms can be used with vinyl liner, fiberglass, or concrete pools. It attaches to the pool wall without the need for tie wires.

The forms are not stripped until the concrete has cured, meaning there is no need to finish or dress the edge while the concrete is still green, saving time and money.

"Any pool builder or concrete contractor who does at least one pool deck a year will love this product," says Dario Baldoni, the company's vice president of marketing and technology. "The high level of relief and detail created with the textured form liners can be matched to the stamp, resulting in a realistic stone look."

Contact: Z Poolform/Concrete Countertop Solutions | concretcountertopsolutions.com

>> POSITION AVAILABLE

SGM, Inc. is the global manufacturer of innovative finishes (Diamond Brite) for swimming pools, spas, and decks, and the leading developer of installation systems for ceramic tile and dimension stone.

We are looking for independently motivated, highly qualified individuals to fill outside Technical Sales Representative positions in multiple Florida and regional territories.

Contact hr@sgm.cc and reference Sales Rep. Position.

AQUA-COMB™
#1 SPA & POOL FILTER CLEANING DEVICES!

- Fully cleans like new
- Saves water & electricity
- Saves time

Made in USA
 Ph: 941-922-7786
 Fax: 941-922-2439
www.aquacomb.com

POOL PLASTER * WATERSCAPES ARTIFICIAL ROCK * DECK COATINGS

The Carrousel® Pump and U-Blend Mixer ...will do them all!

- * Pneumatic, 110 and 220 Electric, Hydraulic Models
- * Simple and Fast Cleanup
- * Low Maintenance
- * Variable Speed
- * Maneuverable
- * Versatile



Quikspray™
www.quikspray.com

PO Box 327 Port Clinton, OH 43452
Leah@quikspray.com (419-732-2611)

THE BETTER VAC V

"IT SUCKS"
 Better than 10 shop vacs

New Design - Rugged Construction
FOR SUPERB INSTALLATION OF VINYL LINERS
 Quiet - made for continuous running; complete with "quick" connect suction wand (6 lengths)
 no plastic parts - auto bypass - & more!
 30 mil liners - Cold weather - no problem!!
 28% Better. Complete at \$399.00 Delivered.

Homestead 800-378-3497
POOL PRODUCTS

New Products

BY PSN STAFF



CPI Pool Products

The wide-mouth One Piece Skimmer comes complete with weir, basket and return fitting. The heavy duty, UV resistant units are quick and easy to install. It's also available for a saltwater system with special screw gaskets. Add-on accessories include a patent skimmer LED light with remote control and a leaf catcher.

Contact: cpipoolproducts.com



DrinKabana

DrinKabana shades and protects a beverage and a phone, while also allowing users to use the phone with one-finger operation and stream music to a Bluetooth speaker. Private labeling is available with logo, trademark or branding.

Contact: DrinKabana.com



Haviland Pool and Spa Products

DuraChlor Activator Plus uses a pH neutral formula that requires no pH adjustments after application. Activator Plus is not affected by UV or evaporation and helps maintain stable pH while buffering total alkalinity. This once-per-season pool additive can reduce overall chlorine usage and can inhibit corrosion.

Contact: durachlorpool.com



Magic Plastics

The new QwikLED lighting adaptor plate makes it easy and affordable to switch-out older incandescent pool lights with newer, energy-efficient LED lights. This lighting adaptor plate offers pool professionals a hassle-free system to renovate older pools while giving clients cost-effective LED lights.

Contact: magicplastics.com



PEGASUS
Vinyl Liners



Sunburst



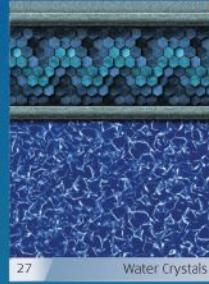
Seaglass



Starry Nights



Harmony



Water Crystals



Oxford



Waveburst



Lakeview



Bayview



Breaking Sea Wall



Silverstone



Stonebridge



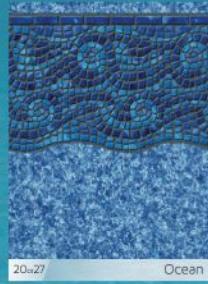
Harlequin



Rustic



Mountain Top



Ocean



Pacifica



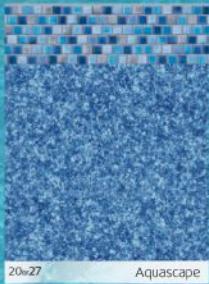
Braid



Garden Gate



Wavecrest



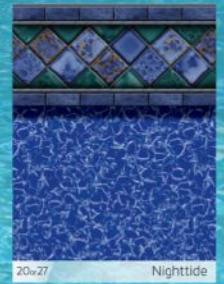
Aquascape



Sea Gate



Argyle Slate



Nighttide

Designed to Fit Perfectly Every Time

25% of our customers are veterans, but we're all *family*. At Lyon, we have your 6.



- Special programs for military customers*
- No prepayment penalties
- Unsecured loans: no equity required



LYON FINANCIAL
IS PROUDLY
VETERAN OWNED
& OPERATED



877-754-5966 | WWW.LYONFINANCIAL.NET

*Available on approved credit. Conditions and limitations apply, including state restrictions. Advertisements are subject to change without notice. Loan terms may differ based on loan purpose and credit profile. Contact Lyon Financial for details.